Photo *The British Rotophot Co.*

This is a picture of little Dutch Sue
Who scoffed at the ocean because it was blue.
She's dressed in her best and pretending to knit,
But the sock hasn't grown for three months—not
a bit!
Still, mellowed by age, we will pardon her guile,
And warm our old bones in the light of her smile.

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"THE ROSE QUEEN."

From the Painting by George Leslie, R.A.

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FROM THE STALLS

Photo Foulsham & Banfield.

VALLI VALLI.

Who Combines the Virtues of Several Nationalities.

Miss Valli Valli has lately been starring at the Empire as The Merry Widow in the Revue. She has a wise air beyond her years, which are just nineteen.

This year she has been provoking laughter—last year she was evoking tears. That was at the Lyceum as the poor persecuted boy in *Her Love Against the World*. She is a girl of many parts and many languages. She is Berlin born—in blood half German, a quarter French, and a quarter English. Result, a very interesting and accomplished girl. The English public heartily approve the mixture.

She arrived on these shores at five, went on the stage at seven, played before the King (then Prince of Wales) at Sandringham at nine, and at nineteen—well, all the world knows something about her now. For she has played to the Dutch, the Germans, the French, all in their own languages, as also she has played to the Americans—in theirs!

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

EDIE KELLY.

A Ray of Sunshine in "Havana" at the Gaiety Theatre.

As her name suggests, Miss Edie Kelly is an Irish girl, and she looks it. She has very pretty dark hair and dark blue eyes, and a peach-bloom complexion.

"I like meat," she says, "but am afraid to eat a great deal; I think much meat spoils the skin."

Miss Kelly is just nineteen. She went to school in France, and speaks French like a French girl.

"I like French people best, they are so amusing. I think, after all, I shall leave England and go upon the French stage."

Foster the export of British manufactures if you will, Mr. Asquith, but put a prohibitive export tax on pretty British actresses!

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

JAMES WELCH.

The Hero of "When Knights were Bold."

"My birthplace is wherever I happen to be acting." But prophets are supposed to get no honour in their own country, Mr. Welch.

His first great chance came at a moment when even a small chance would have been welcomed. He had just been under the grim necessity of raising a few shillings on a watch, and with professional prodigality was getting rid of the money in a first-class restaurant, when he happened to catch the eye of a friend, who told him he knew of a small part to suit him. It was worth £3 a week, and Mr. Welch never had to "raise money" again.

He has that watch now—he loves it—and nothing would induce him to superannuate it, far less part with it.

Mr. Welch says he is devoid of ambition.

"All I care is how I act to-night; to-morrow night I never think of. It does not worry me at all."

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Photo *S. Elwin Neame.*

DORIS STOCKER,

Whose Beauty has Touched Many Hearts.

Among her many captives in love was a linen draper's assistant, who hoped that when he got the long-looked for rise, Miss Doris Stocker would marry him and settle down quietly at Gunnersbury.

"There is no man living who can dress a shop window or judge material better than I can, so you would have the advantage of the opinion of one in the trade."

Obvious as the advantage was, it was not sufficiently so to overcome Miss Stocker's other objections to the suit, not the least of which was very possibly the idea of spending her life at Gunnersbury.

Another admirer's most golden phrase had reference to the writer's income of £5000 a year.

"Is it not possible that we are twin souls?"—added this candidate for the matrimonial stakes.

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Photo *F. Elvin Neame.*

PHYLLIS MONKMAN.

Very Young and Very Charming.

Miss Phyll's Monkman is a bright, vivacious girl of sixteen, not at all unlike Miss Phyllis Dare in outward seeming, and, curiously enough, the two are old school-chums.

Miss Monkman's speciality is dancing, and, notwithstanding the fewness of her years, she has already danced herself into a good deal of popular favour.

Her father is a very well-known theatrical costumier. He tells an amusing story of Phyllis, about something which happened to her when she was four.

The family were out punting down Henley way. The punt was propelled into a cool back-water, and the elders were taking it easy after lunch when a scream was heard from the bank. It appears that the tiny Phyll's had stepped on shore, and somehow managed to land herself into a ditch, the mud of which was pitch-like in blackness. She was submerged to the armpits when rescued. "One-half of her was more like a little negress than anything else," says her father.

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Photo *Lallie Charles.*

NINA SEVENING.

A Deservedly Popular Young Actress.

"Most of my spare time is taken up in signing picture postcards. Cards continually arrive for signature from places as remote as the Pacific Islands. In fact," says Miss Nina Sevening, "a friend wrote to me recently that he had found a picture postcard showing me with a cat in my arms, stuck on a Burmese idol as an offering!"

Once she received a letter from a youth in the stalls, who was accompanied by an apparently firm mother. It was an invitation to meet him after the writer had driven his mother home.

"Will you please blow your nose twice during the next act, and I shall know it is all right?"

Miss Sevening did not blow her nose, but as she happened to have a bad cold at the time the experience was rather a trying one.

She is now one of the youngest of London's leading ladies.

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Photos *The Elgin Agency.*

WILKIE BARD,

Once a Clerk, Now a Comedian.

From 25s. as a humble clerk to £300 a week with public idolatry thrown in is not a bad rise in the world these hard times. Such has been the luck of Mr. Wilkie Bard.

There is certainly not much resemblance between Mr. Bard and Gladstone in a general way, but there is this point, that in both cases their matter as personally delivered is immensely more effective than when reduced to cold print.

What could be more inane, for instance, than this of Mr. Bard's:

> The reason I've got this engagement this year,
> 'Tis because it states in my contract quite clear
> I must sing a song with a chorus.

And yet people who had heard these poor lines delivered in a pained, surprised way by Mr. Bard in Pantomime were humming away at the refrain for weeks afterwards.

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

GABRIELLE RAY

Who Dances so Delightfully.

Quite appropriately is Miss Gabrielle Ray named after an archangel, for there is something very angelic about her dainty face framed in a wealth of the most bewitching curls.

And surely no thistledown kissed by summer breezes ever floated so lightly into the track of a sunbeam as pretty Miss Ray, with that careless happy grace that is hers and hers alone, dances down into the limelight. Thistledown? Thistledown is elephantine in its movements compared with her!

"Yes," she said, "I love motoring and riding, and oh, isn't this an ugly old frock?" ("Charming, Miss Ray, absolutely charming!") "But I'm going to have a new one next week." (A little dab of something to do with her "make up" here.) "And do you like my little dance in the first act?" ("Miss Ray, mere words—") "No, *real'y?* Oh, I must go—they're calling—so sorry—good-bye! Now (pleadingly) do say something *nice* about me in THE ROYAL, won't you?"

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THE SPIRIT OF CONTRADICTION

A Story for Henpecked Husbands.

By Brinsley Moore.

"Too willin' to take unsootible advice," said the landlord—"that's wot was the matter with Ben Smithers. 'E was like that from a boy—even at school they could persuade 'im into anythink. And when 'e growed up, it was jest the same—'e was led into the marriage as 'e made by the advice of interested parties.

"'E'd gone to Birmingham to visit a old pal of 'is, Jem Basford, as 'ad married and settled down there, when 'e was drawn into it. Mrs. Basford 'ad a sister livin' with them at the time, and what does she do but persuade pore Ben as that sister was jest the person to make 'im a good wife. 'E ought to 'ave seen through it, mind you; for the life as Mrs. Basford led old Jem was a plain warnin' to anyone as 'ad eyes agenst takin' a partner from the same stock. But Ben never was quick at seein' things; and them two sisters played their cards so well that afore 'e reely knew where 'e was, the 'ole thing was fixed up and settled.

"My! she was a tartar, she was. I've seen a many rulin' sort o' women in my time; but I never come acrost one as did it so unpleasant as she did.

"'Ow? Why, contradictin' everythink as 'e said. From mornin' till night, everythink as 'e proposed or suggested was always wrong. Pr'aps 'e'd 'appen to remark as it was a very warm day——

"'Warm?' says she. 'You're in your 'ot blood, I should think. My back's like cold water runnin' down it, and my feet are 'arf frozen.'

"And then, out of pure perverseness, she'd shut the doors, and make up such a fire as 'e could 'ardly breathe.

"Or pr'aps 'e'd say in the winter 'ow cold it was.

"'Cold?' she'd shriek. 'Why, bless the man, what do yer mean? *I* don't feel the cold. The truth is you coddle yourself up till you can't stand a bit o' fresh air. It isn't 'ealthy for a grown man like you to be sittin' over a roarin' fire.'

"Then she'd open a winder, and make 'im sit in the draught till 'e got a stiff neck.

"And it was the same in everythink, you know. Whether it was the matter of the Sunday joint, or choosin' a noo carpet, or electin' the parish council—wotever 'e proposed was wrong, and 'ad to be changed.

"I've seen them standin' at their door for a good ten minutes of a Saturday afternoon when they was startin' for a walk, while she argued which way they should go; and then, when she'd led 'im on to make a suggestion, she'd find twenty reasons for the opposite direction. And when that goes on day after day, from mornin' till night, week in and week out, I guess as it does become a bit wearin'; and I don't wonder as Ben Smithers got thin and worrited. Besides—though 'e wasn't in any way wot you could call a clever chap, and I expect made slips like the rest of us—it stands to reason as 'e couldn't *always* be wrong.

"Well, things went on like this till the second summer after 'e was married, and then there come a sort of crisis. It was in June as Mrs. Basford come from Birmingham on a visit to 'er sister, and brought 'er

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five childern with 'er. Mrs. Smithers by 'erself was a sufficient trial to a meek-spirited man like Ben. But Mrs. Smithers, anxious to show off afore 'er sister, was somethink as 'e'd never anticipated. And when you add the five childern, as was the noisiest, quarrelsomest lot as you ever come across, you'll see that Ben's cup was pretty full.

"At the end of a fortnight, 'e ventured to 'int as things was a bit uncomfortable.

"'Wot?' says Mrs. Smithers. '*You've* no cause to complain. It's me as 'as to bear the burden of it all, slavin' from mornin' till night. And as if my 'ands wasn't full enough already, the 'ouse must be crowded out with a indolent woman and five of the wickedest childern as ever I saw. It's the life of a galley-slave, mine is. I little thought when I got married of wot was before me.'

"'Well, my dear,' says Ben very mildly, 'it isn't by my wish as they're 'ere. Why don't you tell them to go?'

"'Yes! That's like a man, that is!' says Mrs. Smithers. ''Ere's my only sister as I haven't seen for two years, and 'as bin livin' in smoke and ashes, and never 'ad a breath of fresh country air since she was fool enough to go and marry that obstinate Jem Basford; and the momint as she's set down in your house you want to turn 'er and 'er five innercent offsprings into the street! I'm ashamed of you, Ben—thoroughly ashamed. But you shan't turn out my relations in that disgraceful way—that I'm determined on. I may be a pore downtrodden drudge,' she goes on, a-workin' 'erself up, 'a pore downtrodden drudge, as is aggravated and contradicted on every point, but even a worm will turn and rend you at the last, and in this at any rate I'm goin' to 'ave *my* say. They shan't be driven away by you; they shall stop another month if they will.'

"And it was in view of that 'opeful prospict that Ben took up 'is 'at and went off to consult 'Enery Slater.

"Now, mind you, I've noth'nk to say agen 'Enery Slater as a feller-man and as a tailor —'Enery is a customer of mine, and I 'ope as I shall always remember it when I speak of 'im. And it's on'y fair to admit as 'e 'as got a sort of repitation in the place—chiefly becos 'e can turn out a lot of big words as folks can't understand, and as I believe 'e don't know the meanin' of 'isself.

"It was that as got 'im put on the Parish Council; and there are those as 'old that with such a flow o' languidge 'e ought to be in Parleyment. 'E might, pr'aps, do as that; but as a adviser in anythink as really matters —well, 'e's the last man as I should go to: pertic'ler in matrimonial questions, which bein' a bach'ler from 'is cradle, it stands to reason 'e can't be ixpected to understand at all.

"It only shows you wot a weak-minded man Ben was that, bein' in the difficulty 'e was, 'e went off to 'im. If 'e'd come to *me*, now, I might 'ave given 'im a 'int or two as would 'ave—but 'e didn't, so it's no good persooin' that line of argiment. 'E went to 'Enery Slater, and 'e laid the 'ole case before 'im.

"'Enery listened very grave, noddin' 'is 'ead ev'ry now and then as if such difficulties was quite familiar to 'im, and as if 'e knew before'and wot was comin'. When Ben 'ad done 'is story, Slater laid down 'is pressin'-iron and gave 'is opinion.

"'The problem of the feminine idiocracies is usually difficult to unravel,' 'e said, beginnin' to roll off 'is big words; 'but in the matter under commiseration the primordial causation is manifest. It's a case of the spirit o' contradiction—in plain English, the inordinary desire to obstruct every preposition with a correlative denial of the appositive assertion.'

"'O,' says Ben, as if 'e understood it perfectly. 'And wot should you do in such a case?'

"'Well,' says Slater, 'if you was a strong man, I should advise you as follers: Take a firm line, asseverate yourself, convict by argumental force, and rule 'er by moral and intellectual superiority.'

"'But I can't,' says Ben. 'You don't understand. She——'

"'Did I ever say as you could?' arst Slater. 'I said "*if*"—puttin', you see, a superstitious case. Bein' wot you are, *not* a strong man, the case is different. We must seek another soluble alternative. Now, I've bin readin' in this 'ere volume,' says Slater, tappin' a book as lay on the table, ''ow man 'as conquered Nature. 'Ow's it bin done? By oppersition, by forcibility, by fightin' agen Nature? Not a bit of it; Nature's too powerful to be circumvented that way. No; man 'as made Nature 'is servant by subtlety, by studyin 'er ways, by learnin' 'er laws, and workin' 'is own plans componently with it. And woman, bein' a considerable part of Nature, comes under the same general consideration. When you can't rule by force you must get your own way by stretagetics.'

"'Wot's that?' arst Ben.

"'Craft—guiliness—schemin',' says 'Enery. 'The law of contrairiness is wot you've got to

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"When Ben 'ad done 'is story, Slater laid down 'is pressin'-iron, and gave 'is opinion."

go on, isn't it? She always contradicts everythink as you suggest? Then your outlet is clear.'

"'Ow?' arst Ben, gettin' thoroughly muddled.

"'Why, plain enough,' answers Slater. '*Always suggest just the oppersite of wot you really want.* Out of contrairiness she'll oppose it at once, and get *'er* way. Then, you see, she'll be pleased at 'er vict'ry; you'll be pleased at gettin' wot you really wanted; and amerbility and reposefulness follers all round. It's the insinuation of a general law to an individgle predicamint.'

"'Lor!' says Ben, the light suddinly breakin' in upon 'im; 'wot a 'ead you've got!'

"'Well, that's as it may be,' says Slater, sort of wavin' the compliment off. 'If a inscrutable Providence 'as imbued me with a promiscuous brain to think things out, and a gift of accurate languidge to make 'em perlucid to my feller-sinners, it's all I claim. You take my advice and try it; always suggest the oppersite of wot you reely mean.'

"So Ben went off to work this noo idee.

"I gather that at first it was only a partial success, owin' to the way 'e did it. It takes a bit of courage, you see, to say everythink as you don't mean, plain and decided; and at the start, Ben was so 'arf-'earted and 'esitatin' about it that 'is feeble opinions didn't seem worth contradictin'. But by practisin' on observations in a general way, 'e gradually got bolder and more certain of 'isself.

"Then 'e started on little things as reely didn't matter much—such as women 'avin' votes, and bein' buried alive, and the colour of people's eyes. And when 'e found 'ow easily, by saying the contrairy of wot 'e reely thought, 'e could get 'is wife to be quite sensible on such points, 'e felt as 'e might venture on other questions as did matter.

"It was a bit puzzlin' at times to find out the exact oppersites of things to suggest—as when 'e thought as mutton must be the oppersite of beef, and on'y found out when they sat down to their Sunday dinner as it was roast pork which 'e couldn't abear. But barrin' little oversights of that sort, the noo system worked very well—indeed, durin' the first week there was only one point on which it reely broke down.

"'I should think you'd better buy a noo feather for your Sunday bonnet,' says Ben, 'opin' to avoid the expense—'cos, you see, 'e'd over'eard Mrs. Smithers complain to 'er sister 'ow shabby it was.

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"'Noo feather?' says Mrs. Smithers. 'Why, bless the man! Wot's the good of wastin' money like that when the bonnet's two seasons out of fashion? . . . But since you 'ave opened the question,' she says, 'I'll go down to Milltown this afternoon and see wot can be done.'

"And the result was that Ben got a bill for twenty-three shillin' for a noo bonnet and veil as she brought back with 'er.

"'Ah,' says 'Enery Slater, when Ben went round to complain, 'I ought to 'ave warned you about that. Female dress don't come under no known law; women'll 'ave their fashions independent of any method or system as you can devise. It's the exemptive item as denominates the rule. But in everythink else you're safe if you do as I said.'

"So Ben went back to try agen. And 'e found as wot 'Enery said was quite troo. The noo systim, now as 'e was gettin' used to it, fitted wonderful. 'E'd only to mention all the things as 'e didn't want to get those as 'e did, and 'is 'ome life began to feel quite 'appy and reasonable. 'E even got Saturday off down in Milltown by pretendin' as 'e didn't want to go. And 'e contradicted Mrs. Smithers into any number of indulgences as 'e'd never ixpected to see allowed in 'er 'ouse.

"Of course, 'is great idee was to be rid of Mrs. Basford and 'er family. And one mornin', when some of the children 'ad broke three plates and upset the coffee all over Mrs. Smithers' best table-cloth, 'e felt as 'is opportoonity 'ad come. 'E actually looked across the table and told Mrs. Basford as 'e 'oped they would stay as long as they could, and it would give 'im great pleasure if they would stop over the Flower Show in September!

"It took a big effert to say it naturally and as if 'e meant it. And 'is wife glared at 'im over the table, and gave 'im a warm quarter of a hour when she got 'im alone for preposing such a thing. But 'e 'ad 'is reward. When 'e got 'ome from work there was a lot of packin'-up goin' on, and next mornin' by the early train the Basfords was all sent 'ome to Birmingham.

"I met Ben comin' back from seein' them off, and 'e looked so 'appy and smilin' that I arst 'im the reason. Then it was as 'e let out about 'is systim, and told me pretty much wot I've bin tellin' you.

"Now, you know, I've always been predjoodiced agen deceit; and I didn't like it. I liked it less when 'e said as it was 'Enery Slater's invention.

"'Don't you go on with it,' I says to Ben; 'it'll lead you into no good.'

"'Ow?' he arst, bein' very pleased with it so far.

"'That I can't say,' I told 'im. 'Only I know as anyone as follers the advice of a man like 'Enery Slater 'll come to a bad end.'

"And so it proved—though 'e wouldn't believe it.

"My own idee is that Mrs. Smithers soon began to get 'er suspicions. She couldn't understand, you see, 'ow it was as Ben 'ad suddinly changed so many opinions as she knew 'e used to 'old. And in persooin' 'oppersites' 'e often, without thinkin', let 'imself in for preposals as no man in 'is right senses would ever suggest. 'Is perfessed notions got so wild at times that once or twice she didn't even take the trouble to contradict, but on'y looked at 'im puzzled-like. But, any'ow, before 'er suspicions 'ad time to come to anythink, the systim was put to its big test.

"The Basfords, you understand, 'ad gone 'ome in July. At the end of August, there comes a telegrapht sayin' as Jem Basford was down with typhoid and not ixpected to live; and would Mrs. Smithers go to 'elp nurse 'im? The noos, comin' suddin', so upset Ben that 'e forgot 'is 'rule of oppersites,' and began to say 'ow awk'ard it 'ud be if 'e was left in the 'ouse alone. The result of which was that Mrs. Smithers went off to Birmingham by the next train.

"Two days after there came a letter sayin' as Jem Basford 'ad died. And it was follered by another in which Mrs. Smithers told 'im that, owin' to speckilations, the widder and childern was left absolutely destitoot, without a penny in the world. It was suggested as Mrs. Basford should take a 'ouse-keeper's place, and arrangements was bein' made for various relations to adopt the different childern. The letter concluded with such a lot about the baby, and wot a pore 'elpless little creature it was, that Ben went straight off to 'Enery Slater in a terror.

"'She's goin' to adopt that baby, that's wot she is,' 'e says, 'oldin' out the letter—'a child as cries hours at a stretch night and day. That's a pretty prospict for me, that is!'

"'Enery Slater smiled in a way as 'e puts on when 'e feels sorry about your intellects.

"'There's a conspicious absence of philosophic platitude about you,' 'e says. 'Wot's the good of a Law of Oppersites, if you don't use it?'

"'Ow do you mean?' arst Ben.

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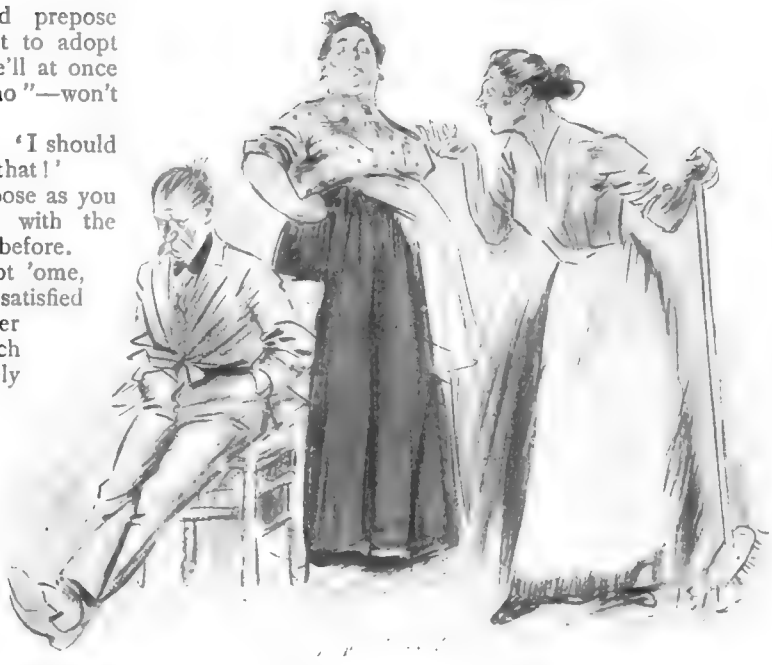
"'Why, write and prepose *yourself* as she ought to adopt this baby. Then she'll at once object, and say "no"—won't she?'

"'Lor!' says Ben. 'I should never 'ave thought of that!'

"'No, I don't suppose as you would,' says 'Enery, with the same sort of smile as before.

"But when Ben got 'ome, 'e didn't feel quite satisfied with the idee. Whether it was as talkin' so much to 'Enery Slater 'ad reely sharpened up 'is wits, I don't know; but some'ow or other when 'e came to write the letter, 'e felt as in Mrs. Smithers' mind the oppersite to adoptin' the baby might take the form of bringin' 'ome one of the other childern—or pr'aps sev'ral of them.



"I guess as pore Ben's rap idly a-qualifyin' 'isself for the loonatic asylum."

"'E was so anxious to guard agen this, and to pervide ev'ry possible point for 'is wife's contradiction, that in the end 'e proposed as they should adopt all the five childern together, so as the pore things needn't be separated. And to make sure of it's bein' opposed, 'e even threw in Mrs. Basford as well, and suggested as she should come and live with them too.

"'I 'ave come to see,' 'e wrote, 'as it is a man's dooty to support all 'is wife's pore relashuns; and I 'ope as in this respect you will remember as I am your lord and master, and let me for once 'ave my own way.'

"'E trembled a bit as 'e wrote them last words; but, you see, 'e'd found out by ixperience as 'e must put things pretty strong if 'e wanted to be certain about rousin' 'is wife's contradiction. Then 'e waited with a easy mind for the indignant refusal as 'e could picture 'er sittin' down to write.

"It came two days later—and it made 'im open 'is eyes.

"Mrs. Smithers wrote as she was proud to 'ave a 'usband wot could send such a letter, and whose 'eart was after all so good and troo. The preposal as 'e 'ad made met with 'er full approval, and was the on'y sensible suggestion as she ever remembered 'im makin'. 'E 'ad 'inted, she said, as in some things she 'ad bin obliged to contradict 'is foolish notions; but in this matter 'e should 'ave no cause to complain of 'er attitood. 'Er sister and the childern was quite agreeable to the arrangement, and they would all come with 'er on a early date.

"And they came. From that day to this, that widder and 'er five childern 'ave bin livin' on Ben Smithers. And wot with the expense, and the racket, and the naggin' as 'e gets from those two women, I guess as pore Ben's rapidly a-qualifyin' 'isself for the loonatic asylum. 'E's tried once or twice to reopen the question; but Mrs. Basford won't 'ear of it.

"'No,' she says; 'you stopped me goin' as a 'ousekeeper, and pervented them as would 'ave adopted the childern. I can't be throwed 'elpless on the world now.'

"And if 'e appeals to 'is wife it's much the same.

"'Why, bless the man! There's no satisfyin' you any'ow,' she says. 'Why on earth did you suggest it if you didn't want it? It's a thing as I should never 'ave thought of myself. It was entirely your own preposal, and you must abide by it.'"

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Mr. Tom Browne depicts the yawn of the superior young man who finds work and existence a bore.

Yawns

An Article that will Make you Sleepy.

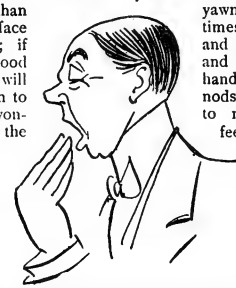
Illustrated with Sketches by the leading Humorous Artists.

By M. Tindal.

When the late Duke of Devonshire was delivering his first important speech before Parliament, he yawned in the middle of it. It will never be forgotten. No wonder the House shook and roared with laughter. For a man to send his audience to sleep was one thing; but to send himself to sleep by his own speech quite another. The yawn proved at least that the speaker was of phlegmatic temperament, not likely to lose his head through excitement. And so the Duke of Devonshire remained through all the days of his life.

From the moment of that yawn, his character was known; and cartoonists seldom portrayed him otherwise than half-asleep. The Cavendish face is suggestive of drowsiness; if you look long enough at a good portrait of the late Duke you will feel an irresistible inclination to yawn. It is curious, but Devonshire House, in London, has the same sleepy appearance and effect.

Many men have such a lethargic appearance that to look at them is to yawn, just as the faces of others always make you inclined to laugh. But there is nothing like a picture of a yawn to produce a yawn. It is impossible, for instance, to gaze for more than a few moments at the Tom Browne study at the head of this paper without following the example of the subject.



The yawn of the junior clerk at 3.30 p.m., according to Mr. Charles Harrison.

Tom Browne, in this study, has hit off a type of yawner to the life. It is the superior young man, who is a great deal above his work, and finds existence very boring. In fact, he is in hearty sympathy with the lines:

> Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale,
> Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man.

As there is nothing like a twice-told tale to set a drowsy man yawning, so the superior young man who disdains his work is set yawning by life in general. Bed is the goal of his ambition.

It has been found an amusing sport to set people yawning; a 'busful of people, for example, or a circle of people round a dying fire. Yawn two or three times, slowly and ostentatiously, and first one, then another, of those by you will yawn in sympathy, for a yawn is as catching as a cold. Another yawn-producing device that is sometimes effective is to place the palms and fingers of the hands together, and slowly open and close the hands, beating time, as it were, with nods of the head. This is enough to make a roomful of people feel sleepy.

Different people yawn in different ways, as the accompanying sketches of yawners clearly prove. Tom Browne's superior young man does not trouble to disguise his yawn. He yawns so often that it is too much trouble to put up a hand to his mouth. When you are in a hurry to find

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your way to a station, and ask this young man to direct you, there is nothing in the world more annoying than the way he yawns before he answers you. His is the yawn exasperating.

The yawn prodigious is a special attribute of the office-boy—it is surprising how so small a creature can produce such a gigantic yawn. Hassall, in his sketch, has caught the expression of it famously. The mouth opens, revealing an enormous cavern; the eyes are tight shut, the eyebrows raised to the hair. Lawson Wood's fat old gentleman yawning wears much the same expression, but his yawn is a trifle more restrained. That he has been dining well, and has been duly bored by after-dinner speeches, is obvious; his is the yawn post-prandial.

Mr. Lawson Wood portrays a typical after-dinner yawn, induced by too much dinner and too many speeches.

The sermon yawn is of a very distinct type and well-pictured in Jasper Weird's sketch. It is not necessarily a reflection on the quality of the sermon, for there is something about sermon-time which, combined with a comfortable pew and a pleasant voice preaching, is very conducive to yawning. A man may yawn all through a sermon, yet afterwards pronounce it to be the finest sermon he ever heard—and mean it. It is when the yawn is followed by sleep, and sleep by snoring, that no excuse can be offered for the delinquent—a point not sufficiently realised by the heroine of this charming *Punch* joke:

Vicar: "Well, Mary, I was very surprised to see John walk out in the middle of the sermon yesterday!"

Mary: "Ah, sir, I do 'ope you'll excuse my poor 'usband. 'E's a terrible one for walkin' in 'is sleep."

What excuse could be more unfortunate?

As there is a distinct yawn post-prandial, so is there a distinct yawn ante-bath, and this, if you have not hitherto observed it carefully, you may study in the very perfect representation made by W. Heath Robinson. It is the most stretching of all yawns—an upward-heaving affair, that draws a man right

Mr. Hassall: The office-boy's yawn—a thing of might.

Yawn of utter boredom, sketched by Mr. Jasper Weird.

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Impressionist sketch of Mr. Blank, the celebrated dramatic critic, at a "first night," by Mr. T. Heath Robinson.

on to his toes, expands his chest wonderfully, brings his heart into his neck, and almost makes his hair stand on end. The reason for the yawn is very simple—it is merely a device for putting off the moment of entering cold water. "When afraid, yawn," is a very sound rule of life. Had Charles I. given vent to a yawn when he walked to the scaffold, history would have delighted to record such an instance of kingly *sang-froid*.

History, by the way, has at least one story of kingly yawning. King Philip III. of Spain was a great stickler for etiquette and dignity. One night he sat before a roaring fire and fell a-yawning. The fire grew hotter and hotter, but he felt it more dignified to lie at kingly ease in his chair and yawn than to rise and dampen the coals; the proper official for regulating the fire happened to be absent, and it would have been undignified for any-one else to undertake the work; in brief, the king was almost suffocated by the heat, and contracted an erysipelas of the head which carried him off. I would not myself believe a word of such a story; but it proves how ready history is to record the yawn of a king.

Other yawns include the critic's yawn and the yawn supercilious. You may always know a critic at a first night performance by his yawns. I believe there are rare instances when critics have been known to laugh on the first night of a comic play, but there is no instance of a critic who did not yawn. When on a first night you see a whole row of clever-looking men in the stalls yawning in unison, you need not have the slightest hesitation in declaring them to be one and all critics. As in the case of the sermon yawn, so in this case the critic's yawn is not necessarily a reflection on the play. The true reason why critics yawn is because they have not paid for their seats. The man who does not pay for his seat can never enjoy the show.

The yawn supercilious is a most offensive affair. It is a priggish, sneering, jeering, taunting, derisive, sarcastic, insulting yawn; the sort of yawn that makes you long to lay a horsewhip on the yawner's back. Look at the prig in the adjoining sketch giving vent to his finely-cultivated yawn supercilious. He is careful not to yawn so violently as to upset the arrangement of his collar and tie. At the same time, he has no respect for your feelings. Would not a horsewhipping do him good?

I have not, perhaps, exhausted the types of yawns and yawners; there is more to be said; but to tell the truth, the writing of this article has proved such a sleepy affair that I would fain lay down my pen. If it has made but one reader of the ROYAL stretch and yawn in comfort, and feel as blissfully ready for sleep as does the writer, his work will not have been in vain. Provided that it is bedtime.

The ante-bath yawn, perpetrated at 7.30 a.m., the water at that time being cold. A clever drawing by Mr. W. Heath Robinson.

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The Tenderfoot

A Story of the Wild West.

By Ernest H. Barbour.

I.

The little town of San Antoine lay basking in the hot July sunshine. Not a breath of air stirred the alkali dust that lay thick along the little main street, and the heat seemed to pulsate in waves from the tin roofs of the houses. Far out on the plains a thin haze shimmered, and the short, sharp bark of a prairie dog broke the intense stillness.

Inside Jake Freeman's saloon a little knot of cowboys were seated at a table deeply absorbed in a game of poker. They were very silent, and the barkeeper, industriously polishing glasses, glanced at them wonderingly from time to time, inwardly speculating on the unusual quiet. Then one of the players looked up inquiringly.

"Call yo'," he said briefly, "what yo' got?"

"Three aces," said the man addressed, reaching for the chips.

"Then my luck's better'n yours, Silver," said the first man, "'cause I got four deuces. First pot I've won to-day."

Silver rose to his feet with a yawn.

"Good boy, Shorty," he said, "that finishes me. Reckon I'll go an' see if the coach is comin'; it's 'most three o'clock."

He caught his sombrero from the back of his chair, and nodding to the barkeeper strolled through the doorway into the hot street. Then he shaded his eyes with his hand and gazed along the narrow white ribbon of road at a black speck that suddenly appeared in the distance.

"Bob is sure drivin' those animals," he muttered, "must be somethin' wrong."

The speck came nearer, and resolved itself into a four-horse coach. The driver was lashing his horses into a wild gallop, and as the coach swung into the other end of the street the outside passengers could be seen clinging for dear life.

"What's the matter?" asked Silver sarcastically, as the coach drew up before the saloon door. "Behind time?"

The coach was seldom more than two hours late.

"Have yo' heard the news?" shouted the red-faced driver, unheeding the taunt. "Have yo' heard the news? The Brady gang's out. They held up the bank at Bighorn last night, and got away across Poison Snake Creek."

"Well, yo' don't need to kill the horses over it," said Silver easily. "Poison Snake's a long way from hyar."

"Not so durn far," said the driver.

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"Go on; yo're a false alarm," said Silver, and turned to the street again.

The coach was disgorging a little crowd of passengers, and Silver watched them idly. He had seen the coach come in many times before, and though some of the faces were unfamiliar to him, he knew the different types like brothers. There was the "Judge," owner of "Bar Z" ranch; there was old Jake Freeman, the saloon-keeper; there was an Eastern "drummer," with sporty clothes and a big cigar; there was old Mrs. Blundell, the storekeeper's wife; there was——

He broke off his musings with a yell that caused the drummer to drop his cigar as if it were a hot coal, and brought the poker players to the door revolver in hand.

"Wake, snakes, day's a breakin'," he muttered in mock horror, "what do yo' call it? Tell me what it is an' yo' can have it."

The cowboys' eyes followed his outstretched finger, and rested on a man who was making his way from the coach to the saloon door. From head to foot he was dressed in the extreme English fashion, and his frock-coat and light-grey trousers were marvels of fit. He wore white spats and a single eyeglass, and despite the thick dust his patent-leather boots shone like mirrors.

The cowboys, who had never seen a man so dressed outside of pictures, stared with open mouths as the stranger paused at the door.

"Aw—pawdon me," he said, as he brought his eyeglass to bear upon Shorty, who was still standing gun in hand on the steps, "is this the hotel?"

Shorty was, as yet, too far lost in wonder to speak, but Silver answered the question with a quickness that did him credit.

"Yas, me lord," he said, sweeping off his sombrero with a flourish, "this is the hotel. Will your lordship have a bloomin' quail on toast, or will your lordship have a forsaken whisky and soda? Command me, me lord!"

"Aw—thanks," said the stranger vaguely, transferring his gaze to Silver, "fetch my bag inside, will you, my man?"

He walked into the saloon, leaving a wrathful cowpuncher behind him.

"Takes me fo' a bell-hop," said Silver in disgust, "well, I'm——"

"Did yo' see it?" interrupted Shorty, coming out of his trance. "Did yo' *see* it? Plug hat an' b'iled shirt, an' a dinky little eyeglass—oh, *did* yo' see it?" he ended plaintively.

The object of his inspired remarks was standing at the bar, while a bewildered barkeeper scratched his head and tried vainly to understand his wants.

"I want a B. and S.," repeated the stranger with emphasis.

"Say, pard," said the barman, "yo' sure have got the drop on me. What's a B. and S.?"

"Why, brandy and soda," replied the stranger, gazing at him contemptuously.

"We ain't got nothin' but whisky, boss," said the worried barman. "But it's *good* whisky," he added truculently.

"Well, I'll have the whisky, then," said the stranger with a sigh. Then, his glance resting on Silver, who had followed, he smiled genially.

"Hello! Did you get my bag?" he inquired.

Silver's temper boiled again.

"Say, I'm a cow-puncher, not a hold-your-breath-and-take-ten-swallows bell-hop," he said wrathfully, "and no snivellin' little maverick of a dude can lope in hyar and ordah me about. See?"

"Really?" said the other, shifting his eyeglass.

"Yes, really," mimicked Silver. "Yo' little half-starved Johnny Bull, fo' a bad Mexican dollar I'd knock your eyeglass through the back of your head. Yo're an Englishman, ain't yo'?"

The stranger nodded.

"Then that's another reason I'd like to plug yo'."

The stranger eyed Silver's big Colt with an amused smile.

"'There was a little man, and he had a little gun,'" he quoted impudently.

The overwrought Silver made a rush at him, his arms going like a windmill, but the stranger side-stepped cleverly, and swung his fist on the cowboy's jaw with a crack that was heard all over the room. The big man stopped, raised his hand in a dazed fashion, and quietly collapsed, while the Englishman, taking the key of the room he had hired, bowed to the admiring but somewhat hostile crowd and went upstairs.

As he looked round his small but neat little room, he thought of the difference between these men of the West and their cousins across the water.

"That man downstairs was going to thrash me for simply asking him to get my bag," he mused. "They're *too* independent, these people."

He pulled the small white curtains away from the window and gazed out over the

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The stranger side-stepped cleverly, and swung his fist on the cowboy's jaw with a crack that was heard all over the room.

prairie. The sun was sinking, and the plains were red with its dying light.

"Yes, it's a great country," said the stranger to himself, as he turned away, "and it's a glorious country—but I mustn't think of Piccadilly, or I'm done for."

Down on the bar-room floor the cow-puncher sat up and tenderly put his hand to his jaw.

"I'll pay him out to-night," he said to his friends. "I didn't get a fair chance. But, holy sailor, how that English dude can punch!"

II.

The saloon was crowded that night. Whether it was through curiosity to see Silver carry out his threat, or desire to see the English dude who dressed in strange garb and talked in strange language, it would be hard to say.

Women there were few; just a girl or two from the "Eldorado" dance hall. The major portion of the crowd were cowboys—long, limber men for the most part, whose wide sombreros and leather overalls were covered with white dust, testifying to the long, weary ride they had made to "town." Here and there little groups were playing poker or faro, but most of the crowd were skylarking joyously. They had money to spend and they were going to spend it, and in proof

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thereof they swung their wicked-looking Colts into easier positions, and invited all and sundry to drink with them.

One man in particular was saluted on every hand, and numerous were the invitations showered upon him. This was Dan Thomas, the town marshal, a man who had the reputation of being "plum' sassy in a mix-up."

"Say, Dan," called a voice above the din, "is it true that the Brady gang's out?"

"Reckon it is, Joe," responded the marshal gravely.

Then a sudden silence fell. The Englishman was in the room. He strolled to the bar and ordered a drink.

The talk broke out afresh, most of it frankly hostile.

"Seems a funny-lookin' gazabo'—what's that windo' pane he's got in his eye—looks like the Prince o' Wales — crazy-lookin' outfit he's wearin' for clothes," were some of the remarks passed.

The Englishman surveyed them calmly, and ordered another drink. Then the crowd parted, and Silver stood before him.

"Hello, English," he said, "yo sure knocked the spots out o' me a little while ago, didn't yo'?"

"Yes," was the reply, "how are you feeling after it?"

"What I want to know," said Silver, "is whether yo' think yo' can do it again?"

"Daresay I could," replied the other cheerfully.

The crowd murmured again. This crazy tenderfoot sure had a nerve. Did he think he owned the town or what? Then a shot rang out and a glass tinkled off the bar. Silver turned wrathfully.

"See here," he said, "this is my palaver. If any galoot starts a gun-play round here he's got to talk to me."

"Aw, rats," said a voice, "he's only a tenderfoot. Let's make him dance."

The crowd roared approval. Then Dan Thomas, the marshal, stepped to Silver's side.

"There'll be no gun-play," he said quietly. "Yo' hear me talkin'?"

The crowd subsided. Silver turned to the Englishman again.

"Will yo' try it?" he asked anxiously.

"One moment," said the Englishman, "do I get fair play?"

"Yes."

"And if I thrash you again am I to be allowed to mind my own business and go my own way?"

"Yes."

"Right. I'm your man."

He took off his coat and vest. Silver's preparations were much more simple. He threw off his sombrero, and putting his revolver on the bar, stood up to his man.

Then came an interruption. A man stepped quickly in at the open door and closing it behind him faced the crowd. He was to all appearance an ordinary cowboy, but over the upper part of his face was a black mask, and he held a revolver in each hand.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly, "I'm plum' sorry to disturb this prayer meetin', but we need the money. Hands *up!*"

Dan Thomas jumped forward, plucking at his holster. There was a stream of fire from the outlaw's revolver, and the marshal sank to the floor.

Then the door opened to let in two other men carrying bags.

"Got 'em?" said one.

The first man nodded.

"Take the collection," he said humorously.

There was a sudden splutter of curses, and another man jumped from the wall. Two revolvers spat fire, and a red streak appeared on the outlaw's cheek, but the man who had fired at him swayed for a moment and then dropped across the table, a limp, twitching heap. And still the outlaw stood there, the small black circles of his gun-barrels menacing everyone in the room, while his men began their "collection," taking arms, money, and jewellery indiscriminately.

The Englishman, standing back against the bar, watched the scene curiously. His hands were above his head, but Silver, forced slightly in front of him by the crush, seemed to hide his right arm. He wasn't sure, but on a sudden impulse began to draw it slowly down, his eyes watching the revolvers. The man at the door made no sign. Now his arm was nearly down. Still no sign. Now it was entirely down and feeling cautiously on the bar behind him for Silver's revolver. Then he grasped the rough butt and slowly brought the gun to his side. Now for a chance to use it!

As it happened, the blood from his cheek annoyed the man at the door. Half the men in the room were disarmed and the other half thoroughly cowed, so what had he to fear? He raised his right arm to wipe his face with his sleeve, and his left hand drooped a trifle. Then came a sharp, vicious crack.

Seeing the man at the door fall, the Englishman ran forward, still holding the smoking revolver. The other outlaws had

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Then came a sharp, vicious crack.

dropped the bags and, guns in hand, were facing the crowd. As the Englishman broke away they both fired at him, and he shot blindly back into the swirl of smoke. Then the air was full of fiery flashes, red wheels spun gaily at every angle of his vision, and darkness fell.

When he recovered consciousness he gazed into a face that seemed wholly strange to him until, the mists clearing away a trifle, he recognised Silver, and smiled weakly. Then he looked curiously down at the red stain on his shirt.

"Am I badly hurt?" he whispered.

Silver turned away his head.

"The boys have made yo' town marshal," he said haltingly, "an' when yo' get well——"

The other smiled grimly.

"There'll be a vacancy in about five minutes," he said, and then, as the grey tinge of death crept slowly over his face, he spoke again.

"I don't know that I'm sorry," he said musingly. "It was the best thing I ever did. But"—his face lighted up as he gazed at Silver—"I wish they hadn't interrupted us. Wouldn't it have been a ripping fight?"

Then his head dropped back against Silver's arm, and with a little smile the tenderfoot went to sleep.

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Picture Paragraphs.

The Editor is Always Pleased to Purchase Photographs Suitable for Use in This Feature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

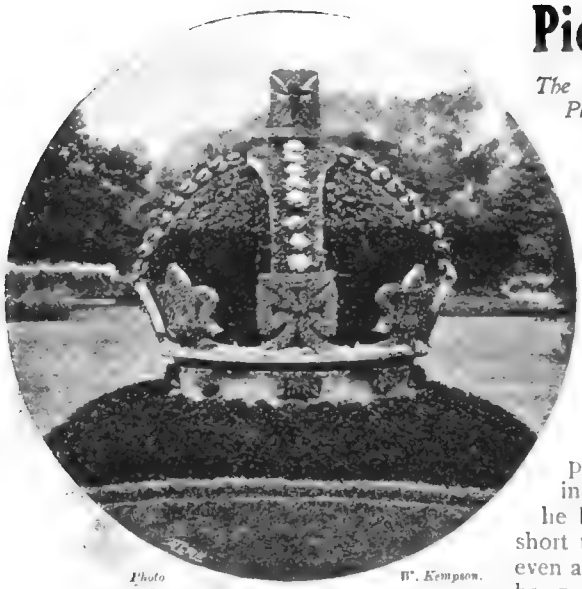

Photo W. Kempson.

A splendid floral design photographed in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham.

BIRMINGHAM'S CROWN.

THIS magnificent floral design was photographed in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, the chief park of that city.

Standing near the main drive, in the midst of a well-kept lawn, thrown into relief by a background of dark trees, the crown proved one of the chief attractions of the park.

It was composed of hundreds of small plants in pots, so arranged that neither the pots nor the framework on which they stand are visible.

No visitor to the park but paused lost in admiration before this splendid exposition of horticultural skill; even the natives of Birmingham, hardened to the sight, did not betray that contempt which, according to the proverb, familiarity is supposed to breed, but showered more than the conventional meed of languid praise on the skill of the gardener who had achieved the wonder.

Birmingham is nothing if not loyal, and not a son of Birmingham but rejoiced to court one of Birmingham's daughters in the shadow of the crown; which symbol of empire seemed to him a favourable omen for his success in the lists of love.

A skilful gardener takes great pride in constructing floral designs such as the Birmingham crown. This pride is quite pardonable, for to achieve respectable success in this branch of gardening is by no means as easy as it looks.

A REMARKABLY TAME SPARROW.

JIM—a most remarkably tame sparrow—is the pet of all the engine drivers and firemen at a certain railway centre in the north of Scotland. He was hatched there within the noisy precincts of a busy locomotive stable, but, falling out of the nest before fully fledged, was placed in a cage and tenderly cared for in the railway office. On the third day he began to be friendly, and in a very short time was flying all over the room, and even allowing himself to be petted. In fact, he quickly became so tame that one day when his owner (the local railway engineer) was writing he flew on to his hand and quietly fell asleep; and when about six months old began to accompany him on his daily rounds amongst the many locomotive engines.

Photo W. Rose, Duthie.

Jim, a bright-eyed sparrow, is so tame that he goes about perched on the shoulder of his owner, a locomotive engineer, taking no notice of the din around him.

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AN INDIAN RAILWAY SMASH.

EUROPEAN railway companies are not the only ones to succeed in killing a passenger now and then. The North West of India Railway recently had what the Americans call "considerable of a smash."

Two trains running at full speed on a single line unfortunately met, engine to engine, and crashed into one another with tremendous force. The result was twenty-one passengers killed, and twenty-one injured.

As may be seen, the two locomotives impinged on one another with terrific force, which was sufficient to lift them completely on end. No wonder the native passengers bewailed their fate, and that it required all the stoicism and courage of the British travellers to preserve that attitude of calm, almost bored, indifference which characterises their race in any such crisis.

Photo *Copyright Illustrations Bureau.*

The result of a railway smash on the North West of India Railway near Ludhina. Two trains running at full speed on a single line met.

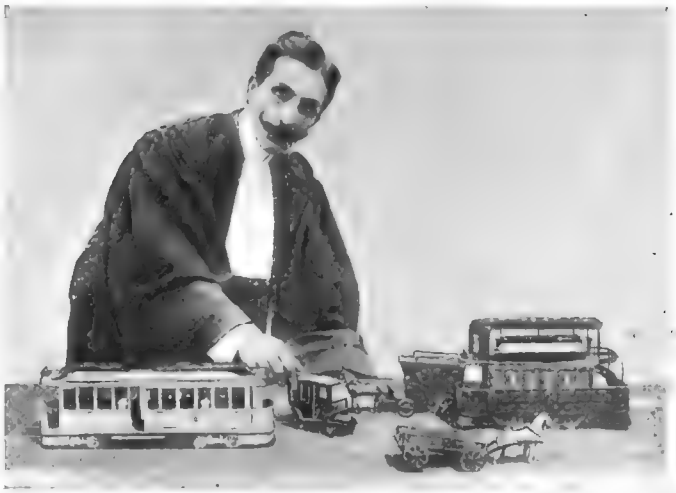

Photo *Brauger, Paris.*

When Mlle. Arlette Dorgère, the French actress, was awarded £6500 in the French courts for injuries received when her motor was caught between two tram-cars, her counsel provided working models to show just how it happened.

A DEMONSTRATION IN COURT.

MADEMOISELLE ARLETTE DORGÈRE, the deservedly popular French actress, recently sustained injuries from an accident when motoring. Her car was caught between two tram-cars, and, naturally, the weaker vehicle went to the wall.

Mlle. Dorgère brought an action for £6500 damages, and fortunately for her she won the case. But the chief interest attaching to this incident lies in the fact that, in order to strengthen his evidence, Mlle. Arlette's counsel brought into court working models of two tram-cars and a motor, which he arranged in such a way as to reproduce the accident before the eyes of the court.

Two horse-drawn vehicles which were in the vicinity at the time of the accident were likewise reproduced, and altogether a most lifelike representation of the mishap was given. This seems a vast improvement on our prosaic custom of merely causing the detective in charge of a case to "produce" the axe with which the murder was committed, or the pair of boots left on the river-bank by an absconding cashier to give the impression that he had committed suicide.

How the jury must welcome such a bright interlude in their tedious labours, and delight in turning their attention from dull evidence in order to "watch the wheels go round."

Nor need the gay delights end here. At the conclusion of the case, counsel might well put the models up for sale by auction, and, in addition to actually "Going," they would be "gone."

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AN EARLY HELP TO SCRIPTURE STUDY.

A Remarkable Picture Bible Published About 1794.

About the year 1794, a Mr. Thompson brought out an edition of part of the Bible with many of the words replaced by pictures. The reason for this he stated in the preface:

"To imprint on the Memory of Youth, by lively and sensible images, the sacred and important truths of Holy Writ, is the object of the following Work.

"The mode of instruction by Hieroglyphics originated with the ancient Egyptian Priests and Philosophers; but THEIR motive for using it was widely different from OURS; not to diffuse instruction, but to confine it to a select few, was their object; ours, on the contrary, is to engage the attention, by striking the eye, and to make the lesson delightful as well as profitable to the juvenile mind."

Whether the objects he had in view were attained by the editor it is impossible to say, but at least he produced a very remarkable work. Though it is not always easy to interpret this picture Bible without the help of a second copy of the Scriptures, the meaning on the whole is tolerably plain, and no doubt the illustrations afforded a great deal of pleasure to the children who read it in 1794.

That Mr. Thompson received encouragement in his enterprise is evident from the following passages in a letter still extant:

To Mr. Thompson.

Sir,

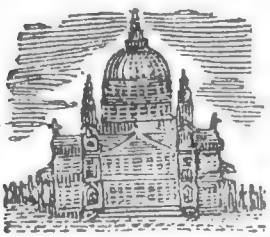
Whatever is designed to render the Word of God pleasant to Young Minds, deserves encouragement; if, therefore, you think my name can serve you in your present attempt, you are heartily welcome to it.

I hope your effort will excite a spirit of diligence in the minds of many, to attend upon the solemn and important duty of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
R. Hill.

Surry Chapel,
May 12, 1794.

Lamentations, ii. 4.

He hath bent his like an enemy · he ſtood with his right as an and ſlew all that were pleaſant to the in the  of the daughter of Zion · he poured out his fury like

(He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that were pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire.)

Psalm, cl. 3, 4.

Praiſe him with the ſound of the praiſe him with the pſaltery and Praiſe him with the and praiſe him with and s

(Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance; praise him with stringed instruments and organs.)

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A GOD'S PATCHWORK OVERCOAT.

In Burma the national god is an elephant, and he is clothed in a coat something like Joseph's. It is not of many colours, but of many pieces, and resembles the patchwork coverings of a former day, once considered so *recherché* as antimacassars and bed-spreads.

The Burmese deity is not altogether weather-proof, and so he is provided with a coat; partly to keep him warm and dry, and partly to shield him from the gaze of the unbeliever.

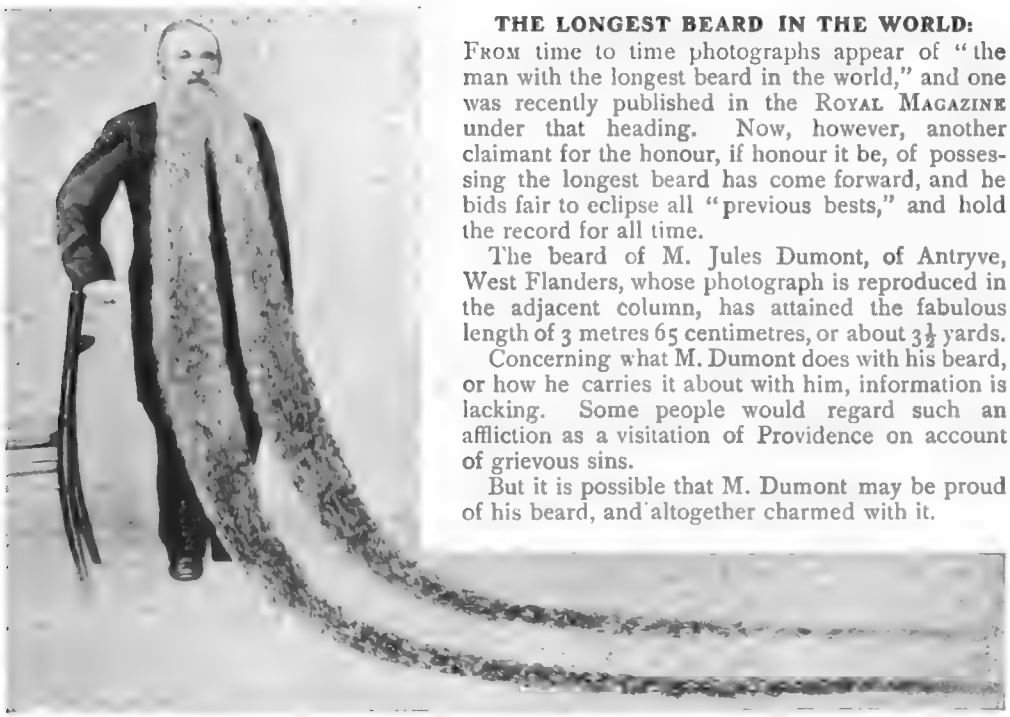
Decorated with Chinese lanterns, and crowned by his little pagoda, the elephant deity is quite striking in appearance, and the Burmese think a great deal of him.

Burma has a delightful climate, and Mandalay, the capital, has given its name to one of Rudyard Kipling's best known Barrack Room Ballads, beginning—

By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea
There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks of me,
For the wind is in the palm trees, and the temple bells they say:
"Come you back, you British soldier, come you back to Mandalay."

Photo *Exclusive News Agency.*

This is the Burmese elephant god in his patchwork overcoat. It keeps him dry, and prevents unbelievers from seeing him.



The latest claimant for a beard record is M. Jules Dumont, of Antryve, West Flanders. His beard is 3½ yards long.

THE LONGEST BEARD IN THE WORLD:

From time to time photographs appear of "the man with the longest beard in the world," and one was recently published in the Royal Magazine under that heading. Now, however, another claimant for the honour, if honour it be, of possessing the longest beard has come forward, and he bids fair to eclipse all "previous bests," and hold the record for all time.

The beard of M. Jules Dumont, of Antryve, West Flanders, whose photograph is reproduced in the adjacent column, has attained the fabulous length of 3 metres 65 centimetres, or about 3½ yards.

Concerning what M. Dumont does with his beard, or how he carries it about with him, information is lacking. Some people would regard such an affliction as a visitation of Providence on account of grievous sins.

But it is possible that M. Dumont may be proud of his beard, and altogether charmed with it.

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Where There Are Flowers

A Portfolio of Little Sketches from Life.

By Lesbia Robinson.

"All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colours,
He made their tiny w'ngs."

A HUNDRED or two pale, anæmic-looking children piped the well-known hymn more or less languidly. Their voices were shrill and piercing—very different from the full, healthy notes of a country choir boy. They were gathered together in a Sunday-school situated in one of the unlovely, poverty-stricken streets so common in that district, vaguely described by the average Londoner whose business never takes him there as "somewhere down by the docks, don't you know."

The proceedings at the Sunday-school terminated with a prayer, and the children poured out into their dull, unattractive surroundings. It was a hot summer afternoon; already many of the youngest looked tired and listless. The air was heavy with heat, and had that stale aroma noticeable in the atmosphere of a room that has long been shut up.

"'Strewth, ain't it 'ot?" gasped an urchin of about twelve. He was one of a family of six, and all lived in one room. His mother made mats to swell the family exchequer. His father was a labourer who worked when he could get anything to do

"I'd like ter be in that there place in the 'ymn," said a little girl who was nursing a baby, "w'ere there's flowers and birds and fings."

"Garn," retorted the boy, "you ain't never seen no flowers, not a-growin' wild. 'Ow do you know what it'd be like? That's in a 'ymn; it's different in London."

"'Ymns is about 'Eaven," broke in another girl. "It ain't no use fer you to talk, Emma Stevens. Wot about that other bit:

'The tall trees in the greenwood,
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water,
We gather every day.'

"We don't play in no medders, and you ain't never gathered a rush in yer life, let alone doin' it every day. That there 'ymn is a tellin' us wot people does in 'Eaven."

"Garn," retorted the boy, "you ain't never seen no flowers, not a-growin' wild."

"No 'tain't," interrupted a boy in a torn, faded shirt, whose trousers were kept up with string. "You ain't never lived in the country, Mary Ann. I did w'en I was a nipper. That there 'ymn is a-talkin' about the country. W'y," he went on grandly, "I've often bin all day in the woods a-pickin' wild-flowers. That was five years ago. I ain't seen no country for five year."

"'Strewth," said the boy who had spoken first, "*ain't* it 'ot?"

* * *

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It was two hours later. Mary Ann had gone "home"; that is, to the one room on the third floor of a tenement building which she shared with her father, mother, crippled brother, and baby sister. To get "home," Mary Ann toiled up three flights of stone stairs, and then dived down a dark corridor which had doors opening off it at intervals. These doors led into rooms, and in each room lived a family. The rush of bad air, when one of the doors was opened, made anyone unaccustomed to tenement buildings step back a pace.

The sole occupant of the "home" was crippled Jimmy. He was lying on a couple of boxes by the window, wrapped in an old shawl.

"Hullo, Mary Ann," he exclaimed, "bin ter Sunday-school?"

"Yes, Jimmy," she answered. "Where's farver and muvver?"

"Muvver's gone to see Mrs. O'Sullivan, and farver's at the pub.," said Jimmy. "I'm tired, Mary Ann."

"Cheer up, Jimmy," replied Mary Ann. "I'll make yer a cup o' tea presently."

"It ain't that sort o' tired," went on Jimmy. "I'm tired o' bein' 'ere in this 'ere room, wif nuffink to look out at but Murphy's Rents. Maud Smith's bin in 'ere, and she's a-goin' ter the country wif *'er* Sunday-school treat. Wy can't I go ter the country and see the cows, and 'ens, and flowers?"

"You won't see no flowers and 'ens till you dies and goes to 'Eaven, Jimmy," answered Mary Ann gravely. "It tells about them in a 'ymn we sung 'safternoon. Bill 'Odges said as it meant the country, but I don't believe 'im. 'E's a liar, is Bill. It talks about playin' in medders and gatherin' rushes, but you and me won't gather no rushes until we gits to 'Eaven."

* * * *

If all who read these words could go, as I have gone, into the very poorest of the poor districts by the docks, into the meanest of the mean streets, and penetrate into "homes" like Mary Ann's, there would be no need to ask for help on behalf of the poor little children. Money would pour in from all quarters of the country.

If all the readers of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE could have come with me one day last summer and distributed tickets for a FRESH AIR FUND outing; if they could have seen the dark, dreadful, stifling "homes" of these children; witnessed the delight of the mothers at the prospect of their little ones enjoying a day in the country; been followed from street to street by an enthusiastic bodyguard of children—they didn't cheer us, they haven't enough energy to be too demonstrative—and seen how pale and big-eyed and listless these children are; then there would be little need to remind you of the existence of the F.A.F., to point out the need for its existence, the work it does, and how it rests with you and the ninepences you send whether Jimmy and Mary Ann go to the country or remain in the mean streets.

The sole occupant of the home was crippled Jimmy.

This year the FRESH AIR FUND hopes to send 200,000 children away from the heat and grime of city homes. The number is not quite so large as that for last year, but in specially deserving cases IT IS HOPED THIS SUMMER TO SEND CHILDREN AWAY FOR A WHOLE FORTNIGHT.

Ninepence sends one child into the country for one day.

£8 2s. sends a party of two hundred children, with the necessary attendants, into the country for one day.

10s. sends one child away to the country for a whole fortnight.

What ninepence will do—give a little child one perfect day in the country.

Every penny subscribed goes in food and fares for the children; all working expenses are borne by the promoters and the Ragged School Union. There are no distinctions of class or creed.

Subscriptions should be addressed to the Hon. Sec., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C. All subscriptions will be acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly*.

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Real Life Romances.

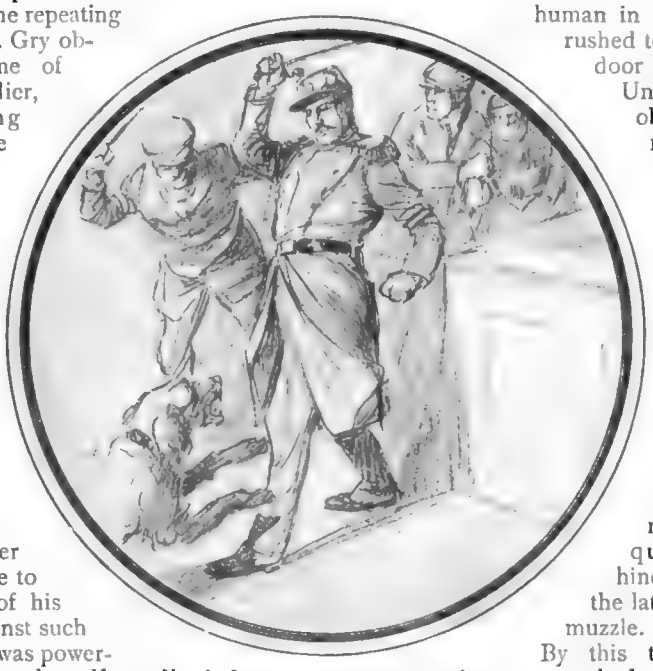
The Editor is Always Pleased to Buy Real Life Romances that are True, and Five Hundred Words in Length.

Saved by a Trick.

THE STORY OF A DOG HERO.

THE scene of this incident was a shop in the Faubourg St. Antoine, kept by Mme. Gry, who since the death of her husband had carried on a business in unredeemed pledges.

One Saturday night last April three men entered the shop and asked to be shown some repeating watches. Mme. Gry observed that one of them was a soldier, and, stooping down, she opened a drawer. Suddenly she felt a pair of hands clenched around her throat. She struggled frantically, and had almost succeeded in freeing herself from her assailant, when another of the men came to the assistance of his comrade. Against such odds the widow was powerless to protect herself. Still she struggled, determined not to be robbed without an effort to save her property.



Now he flew at one man, now at another.

One of the men attempted to force a gag into her mouth. Once this was accomplished, Mme. Gry realised that all hope of summoning aid would be gone. Then she thought of Cæsar. Where was Cæsar? Surely he could not be sleeping peacefully on the mat in the little back room while his mistress was being murdered within a few yards of him! She felt the fingers of one of the men in her mouth. She clenched her teeth, and the man, releasing his hold on her throat, cried out in pain. In an instant the widow's screams for help resounded through the shop. Then, almost hysterical from fear, she called loudly to the dog.

Cæsar, roaming about outside the shop, stopped short and pricked his ears. Again, in evident terror and distress, the dog heard his name. In a moment, as if human in intelligence, he rushed to the shop. The door was latched. Undaunted at this obstacle, Cæsar, remembering a trick that in past days his mistress had amused herself by teaching him, and which was now to prove the means of enabling him to come to her assistance, raised himself quickly on his hind legs and lifted the latch with his long muzzle.

By this time the three men had overpowered the widow. Suddenly a quick, savage bark startled them, and the widow, bound and gagged, realised that Cæsar had at last come to her aid. With curses and cries of terror the men endeavoured to kick the dog away from them. But Cæsar, like his namesake of old, had come, had seen, and meant to conquer. Now he flew at one man, now at another, and then at the third, until with a sudden rush all three fled from the shop, leaving the door wide open, and setting in motion an electric gong which loudly warned passers-by that something was amiss.

Thus the gallant Cæsar saved his mistress.

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Over the Way.

THE ROMANCE OF AN EARTHQUAKE.

IN a small, white house of no architectural merit, standing on the left-hand side of Chad Road, Edgbaston, going in the direction of Harborne, lived, fifty years ago, a pretty widow with an only child, a girl aged, perhaps, eight or nine.

The little semi-circular lawn, divided from the house by a short drive, held a fine monkey-puzzle tree, and by one of the entrance gates grew a lovely pink-flowering almond-tree.

Over the way was another white house, longer and larger, but the owner, a widower, had neither monkey-puzzle nor almond-tree, only a large and promising family of sons and daughters. This was the envy and admiration of Mrs. Blank's solitary little girl.

"Oh! *why* don't we know them, mamma?" she would say. "There is one girl, named Enid, just my age, and she plays with dolls like me. I wish—I wish you would call on them."

That desire was fulfilled in a very unexpected manner. One night, Phyllis Blank, who slept in a small bed beside her mother's big one, was awakened by the sudden, noisy opening of the window, and the loud clanging of a big handbell always kept in the room to be used as an alarm in the case of fire or thieves. She heard, also, a window go up on the opposite side of the road, and a man's voice calling, but she was in too drowsy a state to take in exactly what happened.

This was what occurred.

The voice from over the way: "What's the matter?"

Mrs. Blank shouted: "*Thieves!*"

Voice: "Where?"

Mrs. Blank: "Over the way."

In the hall stood Mr. Dash with a couple of burly policemen.

Voice: "I'll come directly." And both windows were shut down.

"What is it?" inquired sleepy Phyllis, as her mother proceeded to dress.

"I think there are thieves in the house, and Mr. Dash is coming directly."

Mr. Dash? Oh! joy for Phyllis.

Then came a furtive and persistent knocking at the bedroom door.

Mrs. Blank opened it to find her three maid-servants in varied attire, with terror written on their faces, and fire-irons in their hands.

"Please'm," said the cook, "we think there's a man under each of our beds; they heaved up under us, and the bells on the shutters have been ringing ever so."

"Mr. Dash is coming to help us look round," began Mrs. Blank—"here he is," as the front door bell pealed through the house. "You must all come with me to let him in."

In the hall stood Mr. Dash, with a couple of burly policemen. They came into the hall and listened to the recital by Mrs. Blank and her maids of heaving beds and ringing bells.

"We will search your house, madam, if it will make your mind easier," said one of the men, when they had finished, "but we don't expect to find anyone, for we've been already called to several houses in the Hagley Road, where bells have been set ringing, and it seems all owing to a touch of earthquake. I felt the tremor myself when on my beat."

Effusive thanks and apologies to Mr. Dash, a substantial remuneration to the policemen for their attendance, and bed again for the weary and excited Mrs. Blank and her maids.

Next day she and Phyllis paid their first call over the way.

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The Evil Eye.

THE STORY OF A SUPERSTITIOUS OLD LADY.

EVEN the twentieth century, with all its civilisation and enlightenment, has not succeeded in banishing superstition. Not only does it exist, as is only natural, among the more ignorant, but even among the most intellectual it has its devotees.

Now the elderly lady who is to be the heroine of this story must be regarded neither as ignorant nor yet as intellectual. Yet for all her knowledge of Paris she was ever haunted with the idea that one day she would meet in its streets a man with an evil eye. What precisely her conception of the evil eye was, or how, when seen, it would be recognised, is impossible to tell; still the old lady was perfectly assured that on the day that she encountered the horror she would not be deceived, and that misfortune would befal her.

One morning a few months ago the old lady, who, here let it be said, succeeded in keeping her name a secret, went down to her bank. There she spent some time in transacting her business, and in the end emerged with some eighty pounds in notes and gold, and securities worth four hundred pounds.

She had met the EVIL EYE!

Then it was that the adventure began. A young man was standing outside the bank. The old lady glanced at him anxiously, and at once became conscious that the man was looking hard at her. No doubt thoughts of the money that she had just withdrawn awakened her suspicions. Then a peculiar expression in one of the young man's eyes sent a thrill of horror coursing through every nerve in her body. She had met the EVIL EYE! There it glared uncannily at her from the most unprepossessing face that she ever remembered to have seen.

Scarcely knowing what she did, the old lady sought refuge in a tram. When she had recovered somewhat from the exertions of her escape, her eyes turned to the only passenger in the car. The old lady nearly swooned at the sight. It was the young man with the EVIL EYE. The first thought that came to the old lady was instant flight. Reflection warned her that it would be wiser to remain until the tram came to the end of its journey, which would be close to her house, and then to make a bold rush to elude that awful eye, which, strive as she would to evade its glance, followed her every movement.

At last the terrible tram ride ended. The instant it did the old lady swept quickly past the object of her terror, and made towards her home. As she sped along, half running and panting for breath, she glanced behind her. Following hard was the EVIL EYE. Not a policeman was in sight, not a person whom she could call to her aid. The only hope, so it seemed to the terrified old lady, was to reach her home.

Never had she moved at such a pace in all the years of her life. Alas! as the old lady reached the doorstep of her house, she sank to the ground in a swoon.

* * * * *

When she recovered it was to find herself in her own house with a servant bending over her with a bottle of smelling salts. But both the money and the securities had gone. Only too true did she realise was her fear that the EVIL EYE would bring misfortune. Still it did not prove quite so evil as the old lady had imagined, for a few days later she received an anonymous letter in which were the securities, but not the notes and money.

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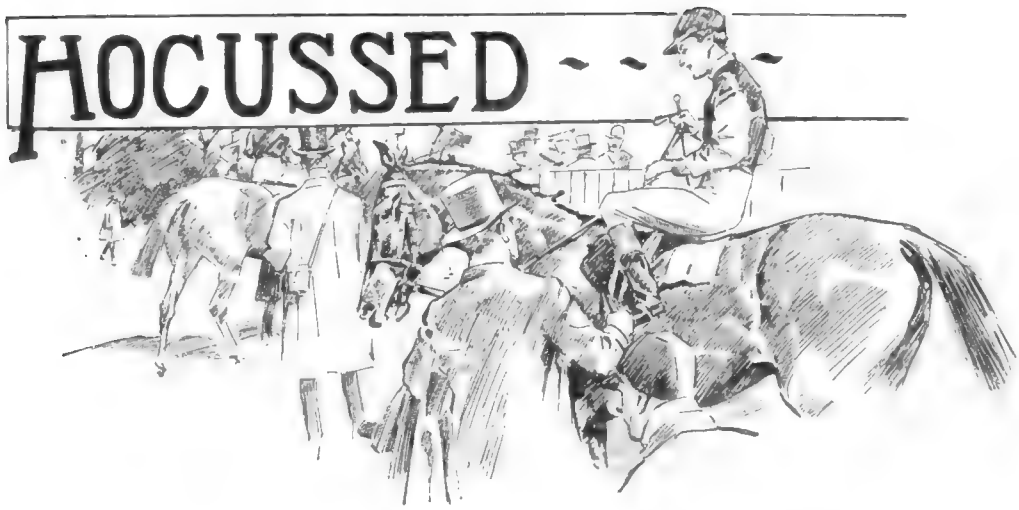

A Story of the Turf.

By J. Russell Warren.

I knew how it would be from the very beginning. The first day young Barton came into our stables I said to myself, I said: "Miss Mollie and that young man will make a match of it, see if they don't."

Now Miss Mollie, you must know, was a real sport. The proper thing, she was. Take a horse across the stiffest country you liked to put before her, and come in as fresh as paint. Bless your soul, she's had many a purl as'd make me want to chuck up the saddle for good and all and been on her feet again in a minute, smiling like a lily.

What she didn't know about horses, and dogs, too, for the matter of that, warn't worth many people's time learning, and she could look after their condition in a way that'd make many a vet. sit up.

* * * * *

Where Barton came from exactly I never knew. All I learnt was that he was a young gentleman pretty badly down on his luck who came to the boss with a letter from someone they both knew.

Now this I will say for the boss—he never went back on a pal. He was a hard man, and his ways wasn't none too straight. But if he once called you his friend he'd share his last crust with you. And if you sent anyone to him, and said: "This 'ere's a friend of mine. Will you give him a lift?" he'd give him his last penny, for your sake.

So when young Barton came down to the stables and handed in his letter, the boss reads it through, grabs him by the hand right off, and says:

"Come in, my lad, come in, and tell me what I can do for you."

He takes him into the library—our stables, you must understand, adjoin Parkleigh Hall, stand in its grounds, in fact—and presently he calls me in.

"Bullock," he says, "this is Mr. Barton. He's going to be our jockey, permanent. How do you think he'll shape?"

I looks him up and down, and says just what I thinks straight out, which is my way, you know.

"Well," I says, "you look as if you can ride a tidy bit."

He smiles at that, and, I tell you, I took to him right off. A man with an open, straight-down-the-course smile like that, says I to myself, is all right.

"I was in the 22nd," says he.

"And won no end of regimental events," adds the boss. "He'll do, Bullock. Take him and show him round the place."

And as we went over the stables I soon found out that my first impression was quite right.

The next morning he cantered about the home paddock a bit on the new yearling the boss had bought at Tattersall's last time he

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was in town. I stood watching him when Miss Mollie came up.

"Who's that, Bullock?" she says.

"Our new permanent jockey, Miss Mollie," says I. "Hasn't Mr. Cartridge told you about him?"

"No," she answers, shrugging her shoulders.

"Oh, he came down yesterday with a note from Major Wills, and your brother took him on then and there."

She eyes him keenly as he comes swinging round, her head on one side like an inquisitive robin.

"He rides slap-up," she remarks.

"That's so," I answers. "And he's a gentleman, too, the right sort of a gentleman, if he is down on his luck, and a real good sport."

She looks up at me with a quick sort of smile.

"You've sized him up without seeing much of his form, Bullock."

"Yes, miss," says I. "But I'll lay a hundred to one I'm right."

* * * * *

Well, to cut a long story short, we soon found that Mr. Barton was a treasure. If I'd made a jock. to measure I couldn't have turned out anything to please me better'n him. And the boss told him right out that he wanted him to ride Chatterbox for the Lincolnshire.

You never saw a chap more delighted than young Barton when he heard that. He wrung the boss's hand, and swore by all the gods that he'd win or die in the attempt, or something high-falutin' like that. But he meant it right enough.

Matter of fact, Barton was the only chap in the stables that Chatterbox would put up with. He jibbed like fury with the other men up, even the boss, but the jockey was always on his right side, somehow.

So he started wasting at once, and, by James! he did it thoroughly. I never saw a man more enthusiastic over his training. It was pretty plain that something more than ordinary hung on the finish of this race, as far as he was concerned.

And it seemed to me that Miss Mollie was more interested than she'd ever been before, even when the boss entered What Is It? for the Grand National the year before. She asked about Chatterbox's condition morning, noon, and night; she rode out on the Downs every day to watch his form, and popped into his stall "just to have a look at him" so often that Jim the boy who helped look after him, almost swore at her. Of course, I saw through it, and I wonder the boss didn't. But he seemed to be worried about something—abstracted, kind of. You see, he was schooling Tearaway for the National, too, and the two of 'em between 'em was costing no end of cash.

So, perhaps, it was a good thing it was me, and no one else, as happened to be in the stable that evening when Chatterbox came in after his first trial.

We ran him against Hector and Rataplan, two of our regular old stagers, and the colt came out of it well. You bet we were all pretty excited when we saw how he shaped.

Only one thing upset me; there were two or three touts hanging round. The boss never troubles his head about them, but I've seen too much of the little ways some of 'em has, and I reckoned I'd best keep a sharp eye on Chatterbox, or we should find ourselves in a hole. The boss pooh-poohed my fears, but—well, I've been training for twenty years, and I know what I'm talking about.

So I said to myself, I said: "It'd be a good plan if someone slept in the loft above Chatterbox's stall." And I went straight off to see what sort of condition the place was in while the gee was still in the yard.

I'd just got to the top of the ladder and into the loft when Barton brought Chatterbox in, made him comfy in his stall, and, though he must have been dead tired after the heavy trials, began to sponge down the gee's legs again.

I was just going to look down and say something when the door opened a second time. It was Miss Mollie now, still in her riding-habit. I bobbed back out of sight, for though I'm old to play eavesdropper, I reckoned I was in for something interesting.

"Oh, Mr. Barton!" she said. (We always treated our jockey like the gentleman he was.) "Oh, Mr. Barton," her voice was kind of nervous and shaky, "do you really think Chatterbox went through his trials well?"

"Splendidly, Miss Cartridge," said Bob.

"And you believe he'll win?"

"He must win. I intend to win."

"I hope so," she says, coming into the stable slowly. "It means fifteen hundred to me if he comes in all right."

"It means more than that to me," says he.

She looks surprised, and no wonder.

"It means the happiness of my whole life," he goes on, getting up off the floor. "Everything in the world depends upon it."

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The next morning he cantered about the paddock a bit on the new yearling . . . I stood watching him when Miss Mollie came up.

She taps her riding boot with her whip.

"Did you get such a good price, then?" she asks airily.

"I don't know—" He was kind of taken aback. "I don't know if— Oh, Miss Cartridge! If I win the race I'm going to ask you to be my wife. No, don't think me so presumptuous, Mollie, I've borrowed a thousand—on some securities of my brother's—and laid it all on at seven to one. And—and—I don't think I'm such a bad sort of chap, Mollie?"

"That means," she says, as brisk and business-like as you please (she was a fair tantaliser, that girl!), "that if you win you get seven thousand clear and I make fifteen hundred. Mr. Barton I—I think if you pull him through you can come and—no, stay where you are!—you can come and—ask me again!"

She darted through the door, and was gone in half a tick. He stood staring after her, fair thunderstruck. Then the top leaf swung back and her head bobbed in again.

"Bob," she said kind of yearningly, "you *must* win!"

And then the door slammed again.

I waited till he went back to his swabbing whistling like a schoolboy, and then came down the ladder looking about as innocent as a cat that has been at a cream-jug.

"Bullock!" yells he, dropping the sponge and near falling over the blessed bucket, "did you hear? How much did you hear?"

"I heard the lot, my lad," says I, "and I'm not a bit surprised. I've been expecting it for weeks past."

"But don't you think—hang it all, man!—don't you reckon I'm the luckiest fellow alive?"

I claps my hands on his shoulders.

"I shall say so, sonny," I tells him, "when you've won the Lincolnshire."

Bless yer heart, it did me good to see the way he squared his shoulders and set his jaw.

"I've *got* to win!" he said.

* * * * *

What I'm going to tell you now I didn't really hear of till the whole affair was pretty near over. But I'm putting it in here because it's its proper place in the yarn.

One morning, it appears, the boss sent for

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Barton to go up to the house. He received him in the library, offered him some whisky —and then begged his pardon for forgetting that he was in training—and generally made himself as sweet as a sugar-coated pill.

After that he got talking about Chatterbox's chances, and Barton, though he wasn't a man to brag, said pretty firmly that he was confident of winning.

"Let's see," says the boss, leaning over the table kind of confidential, "it's twenty quid I give you if you win, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," says Barton.

"And suppose you lose?"

"You made no terms about a losing mount. As I'm on the regular staff——"

"Yes—but—how much do you want to—have an accident, say?"

Well, Mr. Barton jumps up at this. He sees what the boss means as clear as daylight.

"What the blazes do you mean?" he says. "Do you imagine I'd pull the horse? Think I'd run a cross for your dirty money?"

The boss smiles at that, sort of.

"No, no," he says, smooth and oily as embrocation. "No, my dear fellow. You could just come unglued at a bend, or lose a stirrup-leather, say. You couldn't be expected to pull it through with only one iron. No one need ever know. You're smart enough to do the job properly."

"By James, no!" roars Barton, jumping up and banging his fist on the table.

"Look here," says the boss. "Chatterbox has *got* to lose. I've backed against him for all I'm worth, and more—a darn sight more. On the strict Q. T., of course. It's neck or nothing with me, Barton. I'm up to the hilt in debt, and it's only you who can save me. If I go down on this I'm a ruined man. You don't know what it means to me if Chatterbox wins."

"And you don't know what it means to me if he loses," retorts Barton pretty grimly. "No, Mr. Cartridge, I can't do your dirty work. You can get some other chap to pilot Chatterbox through on the cross."

And with that he stalks towards the door.

"I will," says the boss.

Barton stops short at that, for something suddenly strikes him,

"No," says he, "you won't. No one but me rides Chatterbox for the Lincolnshire."

"What? You try to tell me what I'm going to do? My horses are going to be ridden by whoever I choose. Get out!"

"No, sir. The public have got their money on that horse, as well as—as other folks. You shan't do this thing, by James you shan't! If you try to put another jockey on Chatterbox, if you try to play on the cross anyway, I write to the Jockey Club and blab the whole thing."

"And d'you think they'd believe you? You, a broken-down shabby-genteel? You, a mere hired jockey who has been sacked for impudence? My word's worth ten of yours anywhere on the Turf."

"And what about mine?" says a voice; and who should step out of the bay window but Miss Mollie. She guessed something fishy was on and had hidden herself there to listen.

"You!" sneers the boss. "My dear child, women haven't got a word—except the last one."

"I reckon," says she, "a good few people'd take my word against yours any day in the week—Major Davenant, for instance, and Lord Griffiths. Your slate's none too clean, Vernon. Your name's not worth as much as you think. Not so much"—and her eyes fair blazed—"as your father's was!"

Well, the boss was done, and he knew it. But he took his licking like a sportsman, anyway.

"All right," he growled. "I'll scratch Chatterbox and only run for the National."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," said Miss Mollie, short and sharp. "Chatterbox is going to run, and Mr. Barton's going to ride him and win—for nobody else can."

And she was just settling down to rub in the salt when the boss leant back in his chair and fair rocked with peals of laughter.

"Excellent, my dear, excellent," he cried. "You've done it splendidly, both of you. By James, Barton, you didn't think me the sort of man to do a thing like that? Mollie, you should have known me better. My dear chap, I—well, to be quite frank with you, I don't know much about you, do I? and I wanted to put you to the test. And you've come through slap-up. Shake hands on it, my lad!"

But Barton didn't look at his hand, and went out of the room with his chin in the air. The boss seemed genuine enough, he said afterwards, but somehow he couldn't help feeling doubtful. All the same, he saw he could hardly confide in anyone, not even me, and, as it happened, it wouldn't have made much difference either way that I can see.

* * * * *

The touts still hung round, and we kept our eyes glued on Chatterbox's stall day and night. Barton slept in the loft every

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night; he mixed the nag's grub and gave it to him with his own hands; he watered him; he took him out to exercise and trials and rode him back. While he was tramping across country in top-boots and the heaviest of sweaters, I sat in the stable and wouldn't let a soul in. It would have taken a very smart cove to have laid the ghost of a finger on Chatterbox.

This right up to the night of the 17th of March. Next day we were to send gee and jockey and all to Lincoln, and everybody was on edge.

At nine o'clock Barton went off to bed in the loft and I bolted the trap-door after him. The stable-boys went to their rooms over the main block of stables at the end of the yard —the building with Chatterbox's stall in, I'd better tell you, stood by itself at the end nearest the gates. And I sat on a stool by Chatterbox's stall, with a lantern on one side of me and a thick stick ready to my right hand. I'm no shot and never use a revolver, but it doesn't take me long to reach a man with my stick.

It must have been very near midnight when Rover, the watchdog at the other end of the yard, set up a regular volley of barking. I jumped up, seized my lantern and stick, and rushed out. There was Rover, just about going mad with rage, and tugging at his chain till I thought it would break.

Then a stone went crash through one of the windows down there, and locking the door of the stable behind me I ran down the yard. The lads were already tumbling downstairs in high excitement, but not a soul was to be seen. We stood staring round in amazement.

Then came a clatter from the other end. We saw a ladder fall back from the window of the loft over Chatterbox's stable and come clattering down; then a big figure, with something swung over his shoulder, made for the gate.

Before we were half-way up the yard the gates had swung to behind the figure, and we heard the throb-throb of a motor and the whirr of wheels.

I saw it now. The scoundrels found they couldn't get at the horse, so they'd run off with the jockey, after stunning or drugging him somehow. They knew as well as we did that without Barton up Chatterbox didn't stand the ghost of a chance.

The noise at the far end of the yard, of course, had been only a blind to get me out of the stable.

"My bike! Quick!" I shouted.

Hardly were the words out of my mouth than one of the boys thrust it into my hands. I knew the tank was full and everything in going order, for I had overhauled the machine that morning. It was the work of a second to light the lamp while the boys flung open the gate and cheered lustily.

Switching on as I ran into the road, I jammed down the spark, opened the throttle wide, and directly she commenced to pull sprang into the saddle. In front I could hear the throb-throb of the car, and though they had no more than ten minutes' start, I knew they were going for all they were worth, and that I should have my work cut out to catch them up.

The long Parkleigh Hill rose before me —a great, heartbreaking slope. I put the spark on top notch, came down to low speed, and gave her every possible scrap of gas. The hill fair melted away, and before I realised it I was topping the rise. T'other side of it went down like the side of a house almost, and at the bottom there was a fork, but I didn't dare lose a moment. Changing speed I sat back and let her rip. I tell you, we fair screamed down that hill.

As I got to the fork I had to jam on both brakes and shut off my engine. The car might have taken either the main Stoke road or the lane to Thorpe. Anxiously I peered forward as I slackened down. There were the marks of her tyres, clear enough in the light of my lamp. They had taken the road to Stoke.

I jerked off my brakes, switched on again, and gathering speed like blazes the bike tore up the long, winding white ribbon of road. There was a sharp corner where the Manor House grounds bordered the road. I grabbed the bulb of my horn instinctively, sort of, without thinking, and the sudden blare it gave made me jump.

After that corner the road wound gently for a couple of miles, and then came the bit that I knew would tell for or against me. the long steep Horseborough Hill. The road ran straight as a chalk line up the three-mile slope, and as I swung round the last bend into that straight bit I saw the car not a mile ahead of me.

A long rasping grind came down to me on the wind, and I tell you I could have yelled with joy. The beggar had slipped a gear, coming down to low speed, that was as plain as a whip-handle. If only I could catch him before he could pick up!

Throwing all my weight on the back wheel I piled on every ounce of speed. The bike fair

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bounded along the road, and I must have been within half-a-mile before he got her under way again, his engine labouring heavily even on the lowest gear.

But the incline told on me, too. I had to come down to low speed as soon as ever the bike felt the slope to any extent, but she panted as we reached the crest.

The car—a dim cloud of dust in the bright moonlight—whizzed down the sharp hill on the other side, skidded madly round the corner on the right, and disappeared down Frog Lane.

At the bottom of the hill the horsepond stretched across the road, and the water was swirling and bubbling where the car had rushed through. I swished into it with hardly a check, and the water spurted up round the footboard, drenching my feet and ankles.

The road rose again, but only slightly, and I knew I could take every rise on top speed, though I didn't much think the chap on the car could.

Two miles, four, six flew by, and then came the long incline leading up to the Devil's Elbow. Here the road turned sharp to the right, and for half-a-mile ran straight along the very edge of a sort of old chalkpit—a precipice falling sheer down some two or three hundred feet. Then came an equally sharp corner to the left, and a long winding slope down into the plains beyond.

I don't think I had time to feel afraid for myself somehow, but I tell you my blood fair ran cold as I saw the car leap up the hill. I slackened down. I daren't take the corner at the rate I was going.

I could see now that the car was an old rattletrap—it struck me even then that it looked uncommonly like the boss's old Wolsey—and I was bound to overhaul her in the long run. But there wasn't no doubt about it—the man could drive.

Just before he reached the corner he took out his clutch, and just as she swung round, jammed it in again. With a terrific tug on the wheel he hauled her head clean round, and the skid of the back wheel straightened her up like a shot. He took the second corner in just the same way, and spun down the slope.

I was right on his heels now, for I took both corners sharp, and with my spark on the top notch I fair skimmed down that road, my exhaust screaming for all the world like a railway whistle. I don't care what you say, a motor-bike answers to your coaxing like a horse does, and my little beauty was making marvellous pace that night. She knew we'd got to pass that car, just as well as a gee would have.

And then suddenly, as we came to the sharp corner by Christie's Farm, it dawned upon me that the car had stopped. I couldn't hear the steady throb-throb of her engines no longer. I shut off my engine sharp, for I knew I must look out, and went flying round the corner on just what speed the bike had gathered, which was pretty considerable.

I took it all in in a flash. There was the car, pulled up short by the side of the road in the shadow of the trees, and in the middle of the way stood the figure of a man. He yelled something, I don't know what, and lifted his hand. There was a bright flash, a report, and a bullet whistled past my ear.

The next minute I was on top of him. He fired again just as my front wheel hit him, but the shot went wide. The bike seemed to rear up, and then pitched over, flinging me clean into the ditch.

I was on my feet in a minute, but the fellow was lying on his face in the road, without a move in him. There weren't no signs of his pals neither. You see I thought there were two or three of 'em. I turned him over gently, and when I saw his face you could have knocked me down with a feather. It was the boss!

I went across to the car. In the second seat poor Barton was huddled up, and a heavy smell of chloroform sort of struck me in the face. So that was how he did it, was it?

Then I turned back to the boss. His leg was broken, and the fall had stunned him out and out, but his heart beat lively enough, and I knew there was nothing to be frightened of. I set his leg as best I could, and kind of half brought him round. Barton I couldn't get to rouse up a scrap.

The car had ripped one of her tyres right up. There was no taking her back, so I just sat down to wait till some of the others came up.

I didn't know then what I do now, but I've not knocked about the Turf all these years for nothing. I saw pretty much how the land lay. And during the time I sat waiting till Miss Mollie came up in the dog-cart, with the tandem chestnuts in a white lather, my thoughts was pretty bitter ones, I can tell you.

When we got back to Parkleigh, it was pretty near daylight. So we just put the boss in bed and fetched a doctor and a nurse, to look after him. Miss Mollie, after we'd

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satisfied her that Barton wasn't hurt, sat down by the bedside as quiet as a mouse.

She just asked softly:

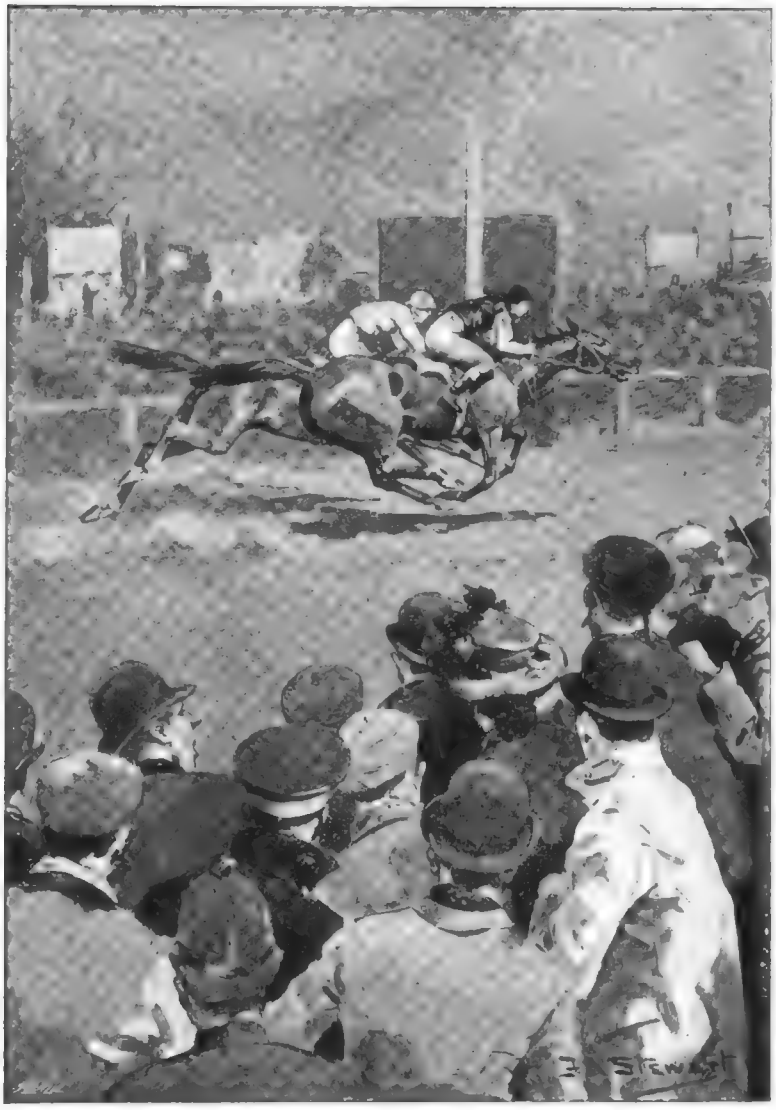
"Will he be able to ride Chatterbox, Bullock?"

And I just answered:

"I hope so, Miss Mollie. It just depends how soon he can get over the drug."

And that was all. In half-an-hour me and Mr. Barton and Chatterbox, with two of the boys, set off for Lincoln.

Barton was fair knocked up all the way. The chloroform had clean dazed him, and he could hardly keep awake. It was pretty plain to me that unless he bucked up considerably before the next morning it'd be madness to let him cross a saddle. When we got to the hotel I put him straight to bed.



We simply couldn't see who was who as they flashed past the post.

Well, the next morning came, and he wasn't no better, nothing worth talking about, anyway. He was so beastly weak from wasting and the rest of it that the chloroform had chewed him up a darn sight more than it would have if he'd been in his or'nery state o' body.

But, bless you, he wasn't going to give in. Not he! He clambers out of bed and into his clothes somehow, and arter breakfast—and I let him have just what he fancied, to keep him going—grabs his bag with the colours in and off we goes to the paddock, where I made him sit down on a camp-stool and swallow all the fresh air he could manage.

Well, the afternoon came round, the Selling Plate was run and the Fifty Quid, and I reckoned it was time to get ready for our event. Jim was walking Chatterbox up and down the paddock, looking about as happy as a man going to be shot.

"Come, Barton," says I, "if you really think you can manage it, let's get to the dressing-room. But you know, I reckon—"

"Where the blazes is my bag?" says he, looking round bewildered.

"What bag?" I asks.

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"My dressing-bag, with the silks in it. What have you done with it?"

"Why, you put it down there beside you."

"Then it's been stolen!"

And with that he goes as white as a sheet and flops down in a dead faint. The strain had been too much for him. Flesh and blood couldn't stand it.

I yells to Jim:

"Have you seen Mr. Barton's bag?"

"No," says he. "He put it beside him."

I just shrugged my shoulders and swore. I was just going to tell the starter we must scratch the gee at the post, when there was a touch on my arm.

"Mr. Bullock," says a voice, "I'm riding Chatterbox."

I swung round. There was a dark young man in a long yaller mackintosh and a black jockey cap. I stared at him for a minute, and then as a smile rippled across his face I saw who it was.

"Good Lord, Miss Mollie!" said I, clean dumfounded. "What's this mean?"

She flung open her mac, and showed underneath breeches and tops and the scarlet and black colours.

"It means I've turned jockey," she answered, and her mouth shut firm and hard. "Tommy's looking after Bob"—her eyes *would* wander towards her lover—"take me and get me weighed in now."

She was weighed in all right, and I gave her my hand up into the saddle. By James, she chucked her leg over as comfor'ble as if she'd been born in the pigskin—and so she had, in a manner of speaking.

And that there cross-grained Chatterbox, what wouldn't stick no one across him but Barton in the or'nery way of things, was like a lamb with Miss Mollie up.

I led her out of the paddock in a sort of dream, and watched her take her place with the others. Up went the starting gate, and the whole line leapt off.

I went back to Barton and found him just coming round.

"Come along," I said.

And he watched the race leaning on my shoulder, with Jim on the other side helping to hold him up.

They all went up in a bunch, and for pretty near thirty seconds kept like it. Then a yaller jacket flashed out of the clump—that was Choufleur—and a purple and white on his heels—Galloping Major. Two or three others began to drop behind, out of it completely, but the main clump hung together, 's if they'd been glued.

They came sweeping round the bend, and one gee went crash against the inside rails. Our hearts was fair in our mouths, I can tell you, and the relief we felt when we saw that it was a blue jacket, and not a red and black 'un, was pretty nigh brutal.

One minute—two-thirds of the race gone, and Choufleur and the Major neck and neck, three lengths—four—away from the bunch. And then a red and black jacket leaps out of the clump, same as if it'd been shot out of a gun, and the crowd fair yelled itself hoarse.

"It's Chatterbox, sure enough," says a man near me. "He'll do it yet!"

And I knew he would. There was pretty near six hundred yards to the post, yet he'd half-a-minute to pass 'em in. He just flew on, and the others' lead went down a yard at a time.

Then the purple and white chap sat right back, and I knew Galloping Major was done.

Chatterbox fair flashed past him, and was at Choufleur's heels. He was at his girth, Miss Mollie clean over his neck, and him fully extended, with his head stuck right out. The post was horribly near. Another two or three seconds; Chatterbox forged up—up to the other's neck. It was stride for stride then. We simply couldn't see who was who as they flashed past the post. And for a minute or two neither did the people. There wasn't a shout. Just dead silence.

And then up went the numbers. By James, Chatterbox had won! By a bare neck, they told us afterwards.

I dropped Barton and ran out to lead Chatterbox in. The people were all round cheering the gee and the jockey—and they saw it was a woman now, for her hair was tumbling all round her shoulders—but she didn't take no notice of them. She just fell out of the saddle into my arms, and then stumbled across to where Bob stood, white and shaking. And she flung her arms round his neck and fair sobbed her heart out on his shoulder, me holding the pair of 'em up, and Chatterbox licking their faces with his great, rough tongue. By James, she was only a woman, after all!

* * * * *

Parkleigh Stables belong to Mr. and Mrs. Barton now, and I still train the gees there. Mr. Cartridge has gone abroad, for his health, it is understood. Mr. Bob never rides in the races, and neither does Miss Mollie, you may be sure. But, bless your soul, there's a little 'un growing up here what'll make the best of gentlemen jockeys, and it's old Joe Bullock as shall lead him out of the paddock, too.

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WHEN YOUNGSTERS KISS

Photo *Bernard Lowndes, Monkhouse, Cheadle, Staffs.*

In the January number of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE the Editor offered a prize of five guineas for the best photograph of two children kissing. Some of the best efforts received in the competition are reproduced in this article. The winning photo is on page 234.

By John Jones.

There are some who hold that kissing ought to be abolished. They define a kiss as a means of transmitting germs. Whether they are right or wrong, it is ten chances to one that anti-kissers have no children.

For the kiss of a baby is something far more powerful than a germ theory. Beneath the caressing touch of a pair of rosebud lips, the germ theory is pulverised to atoms. It would be a mother with a heart of stone who, when her baby puts up its face for a kiss, stopped to reason: "Shall I, if I respond, transmit a microbe?"

Mothers and fathers know very well that kissing can never be abolished. Faddists may prove their case to the hilt, but they can no more stop the baby kissing or being kissed than they can stop the spinning of the earth.

Photo *"Jerome," 283 Lord Street, Southport.*

Kissing under the mistletoe. Unusual as it may seem, while Pierrot is intent on the business in hand, Pierrette appears more interested in the mistletoe than the chaste salute.

Of course, to the bachelor uncle a baby's kiss is something utterly objectionable. He has been known to use bad language in defining it, and to call it a "slobber" is his least offensive way of stating the case. Perhaps a reason for this is that kissing, whether of babies or by babies, is a natural act of affection as between the young of the human creature and its parents.

Such a theory, however, is open to strong attack. If we were asked to prove that kissing is a natural instinct with babies, we should be in a difficulty. When you come to think deeply about this problem, you find it equal in complexity to that stupendous question:

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Was the chicken made before the egg, or the egg before the chicken?

There is no doubt that babies can kiss at a very early period. The kiss at first is a rudimentary affair, and is remarkable for the fact that it is always given with the mouth wide open. It quickly improves in quality, however, and is generally perfected at about the age of seventeen in the case of girls and at twenty-four in the case of boys.

The student of this subject knows that, while children delight to kiss creatures or things that they love, they object strongly to kissing where there is no affection. A child will kiss anything that it takes a fancy to, from a woolly bear to a door-handle, and will lavish the divinest kisses on a rag-doll; but all efforts may fail dismally to make the same child give a nice kiss to the maiden aunt from whom perhaps a legacy is expected if the child wins favour.

Photo *Miss Mabel Walton, Likoma, Roundhay, Leeds.*

The prize-winning picture. The great merit of this photo is the delightfully natural pose of the little boy and girl. They both seem to enjoy the proceedings so thoroughly.

Children very soon learn the value of a kiss as an aid towards getting what they want. Sometimes they employ this weapon in a way to break hearts. A child begs for something not good for it; say, a third *marron glacé*. The mother firmly refuses. Then the child throws its arms about the mother's neck, and half suffocates her with kisses. How shall the mother resist? Yet if she does not harden her heart the child must be sick!

There is a most pathetic story about a little boy of four whose playmate died. He was taken on a visit to the bereaved father, and his first act was to give him a kiss, and to ask ingratiatingly: "Now that Paul is dead, you will give me his drum and his wooden horse, won't you?" Of course, he did not mean to be unkind. He had been told that his playmate had been taken to a happy land where he would have no use for toys, and it was quite natural that he should think of his drum even in a moment of tragic sorrow. But how bitter-sweet must have been his kiss when its object was known!

Children are sometimes very particular about whom they kiss. There was a queer scene once between two baby children in a London park—one an aristocrat, the other possibly a chimney-sweep's son, judging by his sooty appearance. They began to make friends, but it was a long time before they got farther than staring at each other. Gradually, however, they advanced, and presently each held out a hand. And they were just about to kiss each other, when the little aristocrat suddenly frowned, ejaculated "Nasty!" and swung on his heel. He had noticed that his new chum's hand had imparted some of its grime to his own lily-white one. All those who were watching the scene in delight were disappointed at not seeing a baby's kiss

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demolish class barriers. Children have queer ideas about the nature of kisses. I know a baby-boy of three who looks upon kisses as tangible things, and believes that he has a limited store of them concealed somewhere within his person—a store that is replenished each day, however, by unknown powers. In the morning he is free with his kisses, and does not hesitate to spend them. But as the day goes on he begins to be afraid that he may run short. Sometimes he will announce that he has only three kisses left, and cannot spare you one. Or he will pick you out a tiny one from his store, of small account in his eyes, treasuring the better ones against a rainy moment. And sometimes, if you ask him for a kiss in the evening, he will declare that he has not a single kiss left in stock, but will have a fresh supply next day.

Anyone who tries to take a photograph of two children kissing will soon learn a great deal about their ideas on this subject. The first thing made clear is that children cannot be induced to kiss prettily to order. It is easy enough

Photo J. G. Goddard, 81 King Street, Leicester.
A fond, farewell kiss.

Photo J. Hill, 2 Ulsoor Road, Bangalore.
Kissing in a distant corner of the Empire.

to pose two children in a kissing attitude, but the effect will always be strained and unnatural.

I am informed by Mr. Richard Speaight, the great child-photographer, who has taken some lovely studies of children kissing, that his art holds nothing more difficult than the catching of a child's kiss on the camera's plate.

He explained that if the kiss is a posed one the children will be almost certain to look, not at each other, but at the camera. Now, a child's natural kiss is only delivered while it is looking at the object kissed. So Mr. Speaight, when he wishes to photograph, say, a little boy kissing his sister, never dreams of saying: "Stand close to sissy, put your arms about her, now kiss!" Instead, he will say to the boy: "Do you love sissy? You do? Well, then, just show me how you love her!" And at this suggestion the boy will fling his arms naturally around the sister, and when the camera's shutter clicks a natural kiss is recorded worth a thousand artificial ones.

"The art of taking good photographs of children," declares Mr. Speaight, "is a gift. It is impossible for anybody not in sympathy with

Photo J. G. Goddard, 81 King Street, Leicester.
A clandestine kiss. This small maiden evidently would not be denied, and even climbed for her kiss.

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Photo *C. R. Webber, Olpho, Mefi, Falcombe, Devon.*

A charming photo of two sisters kissing.

children to take natural studies of them. The photographer who would succeed *must* be a child himself. This is specially true if sympathetic, lovable poses are sought. The photographer must bring himself down to a child's level."

So firmly does Mr. Speaight believe in this last axiom that when playing with children preparatory to photographing them he has a wonderful way of reducing his stature. Many people forget that to a child's eyes a full-grown man is a monstrously big creature. Mr. Speaight will squat on the floor beside a child and curl himself up into such a small compass that to look at he is nothing more formidable than a child. So he wins confidence. And all the time there is a bulb in his pocket, which he has only to press to expose the plate in his camera.

To secure pictures of pretty, affectionate poses, children, then, must be made to feel quite at their ease. "They must be happy," says Mr. Speaight. "There must be a harmony between their surroundings and the sentiments the photographer wishes to produce. Some children want light for happiness, some music, others toys. It is curious how the simplest devices often succeed in producing the desired expression on a child's face when every elaborate scheme has failed. Often by wetting a florin and attaching it to my forehead, then bidding a child watch to see when the coin will fall, I have induced a look of wonder and interest that the newest toy marvels have failed to evoke. The act of rolling about the floor is another simple device for setting children at ease when they come into a strange studio and are face to face with a camera."

A great art is to make children take up specially planned poses in a natural way. Many pretty schemes suggest themselves as suitable for kissing subjects. It is effective, for instance, to photograph a child leaning out of a window to kiss a playmate. Or a boy and girl may be induced to pretend to greet each other on a doorstep with the kiss ceremonious. Such ideas as these are quite hopeless unless carried out in a natural way.

Photo *Miss Recano, Victoria Villa, Europa Road, Gibraltar.*

In this instance, as is frequently the case, the small cavalier is rather above such a girlish proceeding as kissing. The little girl, however, instinctively enters into it thoroughly.

Photo *Frank H. Keveren, Stoke Villa, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham.*

"He stoops to conquer."

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An Ancestral Secret

The Story of a Clerical Cook.

By Victor L. Whitechurch.

The Reverend Stephen Metcalfe, a fragile, aristocratic man, whose refined and almost foreign appearance was augmented by a thin, pointed beard and delicate little moustache, sat in his study, sorely puzzled.

When, some seven years previously, the Bishop of Frattenbury had appointed him to the vacant living of Claystock, he had gone thither bright with hope and earnestness. He had worked well and truly those seven years in the little country parish, with a devotion that had gained him the respect of all.

But he was poor—terribly poor. A friend of the writer's once said that he never knew the sardonic humour of the Church of England till she offered him a "living" of £130 per annum, with stabling for five horses! And the "living" of Claystock was more or less of a white elephant to a man with barely any private means, a delicate wife, and a boy of thirteen at school. The house had to be "kept up"; the parish had to be "kept up"; the position—ironical word!—had to be "kept up."

He had tried many things in order to augment his slender means. Pupils he had long since discarded, for though a scholar, he had not the power of teaching others. Poultry-keeping had proved disastrous. "Paying guests" had not paid, and were a source of worry to his wife. He had attempted literature, but his rather stilted efforts had all come back with that fatal line or two of print commencing: "The Editor regrets——"

At length a crisis was looming upon him in the shape of unpaid bills and a letter from a Harley Street physician strongly advising him to send his wife to the South of France for the winter.

He sighed heavily to himself as he opened the morning paper, more from force of habit than from interest. For this great puzzle of his life was lying heavy upon his soul. He was a proud man—a very proud man, with the blue blood of an old family to keep that pride alive. He was ashamed to beg—for himself. Goodness knows he had begged enough for the needs of the church and parish! He had tried digging in many fields, and could not. And his nature forbade him to descend to subterfuge.

"I would do *anything* honest," he said to himself, "if I could only get a little money."

"The love of money is the root of all evil," says the Apostle. The man who does not love it, but who does want it badly is in a worse case than perhaps the Apostle in question thought of.

Presently his eye fell upon a paragraph in the paper under this heading:

Carroll's. Reported loss of a valuable property.

At first he read the paragraph without much interest. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he read it over again, finally putting down the paper and leaning back in his study chair, lost in thought.

There was a large, old-fashioned iron box in the corner of his room, fastened by an ancient padlock, and by degrees he turned his eyes upon it. Then he rose from his chair, unlocked the box, and went down on his knees beside it. It was full of old papers—the records of generations of the Metcalfe family—faded leases and agreements dated at the time when the Metcalfes had not felt the want of money—letters, and other memoranda, only of interest to him—almost the sole surviving relative.

He rummaged through these contents till he found what he wanted—a ragged, torn square of paper, filled with writing in a

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cramped hand, brown and faded with age, and in Latin.

It began: "*Ostrea viginti cape et ova recentia decem——*"

It was signed "Antonius Metcalfe," and dated about the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The Reverend Stephen Metcalfe sat down at his table again, laid the paper thereon, and, for a long time, studied it carefully. Once or twice he smiled to himself, for the Latin was in places hardly classical, and his scholarly mind was amused. It seemed to interest him intently, and, when he had finished, he took a sheet of paper and began a letter.

"No," he said to himself presently, as he tore up what he had written, "I will go and see them myself. If anything is to be had out of it I must try and drive a hard bargain."

The Vicar's parishioners would have been surprised could they have seen him a little later on that morning, not in his study, but in the kitchen, making a particularly tasty omelet for his invalid wife; for the cooking of the maid-of-all-work was very plain indeed, and Mrs. Metcalfe's appetite was a fanciful one, nor had she strength to do much household work.

He was rewarded for his efforts by the bright smile with which his pale-faced wife received his attention, and he sat down to his own bread and cheese luncheon with a certain hope in his heart.

Early the next morning he announced his intention of going to London for the day, a most unusual proceeding, for although Claystock was on the borders of the Frattenbury Diocese, and only some thirty miles from town by the main line that ran through the village, the Vicar's slender resources made him think many times before he paid for a return ticket.

He returned in time for the simple evening meal which went by the name of "dinner" at the Vicarage.

"I've told Sarah to cook you a steak," said his wife, "and I do hope she hasn't spoilt it. For I know you must be hungry—you generally starve yourself when you go out for the day."

"Thank you, dear," replied the Vicar, with quite a little chuckle, "but I've had an excellent luncheon — yes, an excellent luncheon!"

She looked at him in some surprise. He was quite gay and cheerful, while every now and then a peculiar, dogged smile curled the corners of his mouth and made his eyes twinkle.

"I've some good news for you, Clara," he said, when he had finished his meal, "I think you'll be able to take that trip to the South of France this coming winter."

"What *do* you mean, Stephen?"

"Just what I say, my dear. I've had a—well—a little stroke of fortune—I've—er—secured some work in town. It will necessitate my absence from Claystock two or three times a week, but I think I can arrange to do my work in the parish with a little extra pressure."

"My *dear* Stephen—you take my breath away. *What* is this mysterious appointment? When did you hear of it? Is it tuition?"

"*You* take my breath away with so many questions, dear," replied the Vicar mildly. "Tuition—" he went on, as he remembered that his wife had always been proud of his scholarly attainments, and had often thought that he was wasted in a village—"well—er—to a certain extent—to a certain extent——the fact is, darling," and his voice assumed a graver tone. "I'm going to ask you to let me keep the details of my—er—appointment even from *you*. It's a little fancy I have, and I know you won't mind."

She was puzzled, but she trusted him so completely that she did not press for his reason.

"I may tell you this," he went on, "that—strangely enough—I owe my little stroke of good fortune—in a roundabout way—to my great-grandfather, Anthony Metcalfe."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, in a bewildered tone of voice. She knew something of his family history, and she had often heard of this Anthony Metcalfe, who had done much to impoverish his succeeding race by the jovial life he had led in Georgian days—those days of good living and "three-bottle men."

Presently he said, a little uncomfortably, and with a slight blush heightening the colour of his cheeks:

"I do not wish it talked about. I—er—mean that our private concerns have nothing to do with the parish. People are very inquisitive sometimes—and—well if I do my work here my temporary absences from Claystock, whatever construction may be placed upon them, are my own affair."

Regularly three times a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, did the Reverend Stephen Metcalfe appear at 8.30 a.m. on the up platform of Claystock Station and journey to London, reappearing in his parish in time for his five o'clock evensong. Sometimes,

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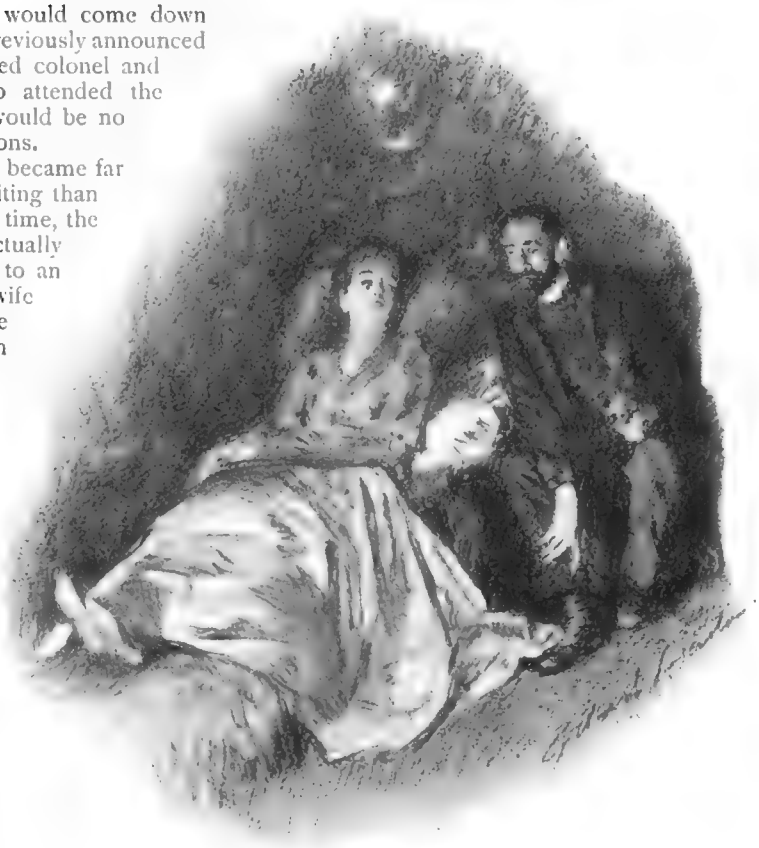
but on rare occasions, he would come down by the last train, having previously announced for the benefit of the retired colonel and the three old ladies who attended the daily services that there would be no evensong on these occasions.

Moreover, his sermons became far more cheerful and inspiriting than they had been for a long time, the tradesmen's bills were punctually settled, his boy was sent to an excellent school, and his wife took her journey into the South of France, and in time he was able to announce that he hoped she would return strong and well before Easter.

There were all kinds of speculation as to why he took that tri-weekly journey. The colonel had asked him point-blank and had received quite as point-blank a hint back that it was no business of his. He had even been watched by prying eyes when he had alighted at the London terminus, but had evaded curiosity with evident intention.



"I've some good news for you, Clara," he said.

Now and again, he looked up at the portrait of a gentleman in wig and ruffles that hung in his dining-room—old Anthony Metcalfe—and smiled to himself—sometimes ejaculating:

"I wonder what you would say if you knew! There was more in that dog Latin of yours than ever you did for your family, great-grandfather mine!"

* * * * *

The Lord Bishop of Frattenbury sat in a first-class carriage, speeding away from his Cathedral City to the Metropolis, his Gladstone bag on the seat in front of him and a smaller bag containing correspondence beside him.

He was in a particularly good humour that day, for he was going to make an important little speech in a debate in the House of Lords in the afternoon, and he flattered himself that he had arranged his points with a judicious care that would enhance that reputation for statesmanship of which he was justly proud.

Moreover, a pleasant function awaited him in the evening. There was to be a dinner of the "Anglo-Saxon Historical and Research Society," and he was to be one of the two principal guests. He felt, with much satisfaction of heart, that his essay on "Saxon Nomenclature in the Diocese of Frattenbury and some Notes on Early Anglian Remains in the City of Frattenbury," an essay which he had published in one of the leading monthlies, had given rise to much discussion and appreciation among the members of the society.

The other guest of honour was to be His Serene Highness Prince Ehrenstein von Rützenthal, a worthy German, who was reputed to possess a profounder knowledge of the roots of Anglo-Saxon verbs than any living man.

So, feeling at rest with the world, the worthy prelate carefully wiped his *pince-nez* with his immaculate white silk handerchief—he who wears silk aprons can never carry

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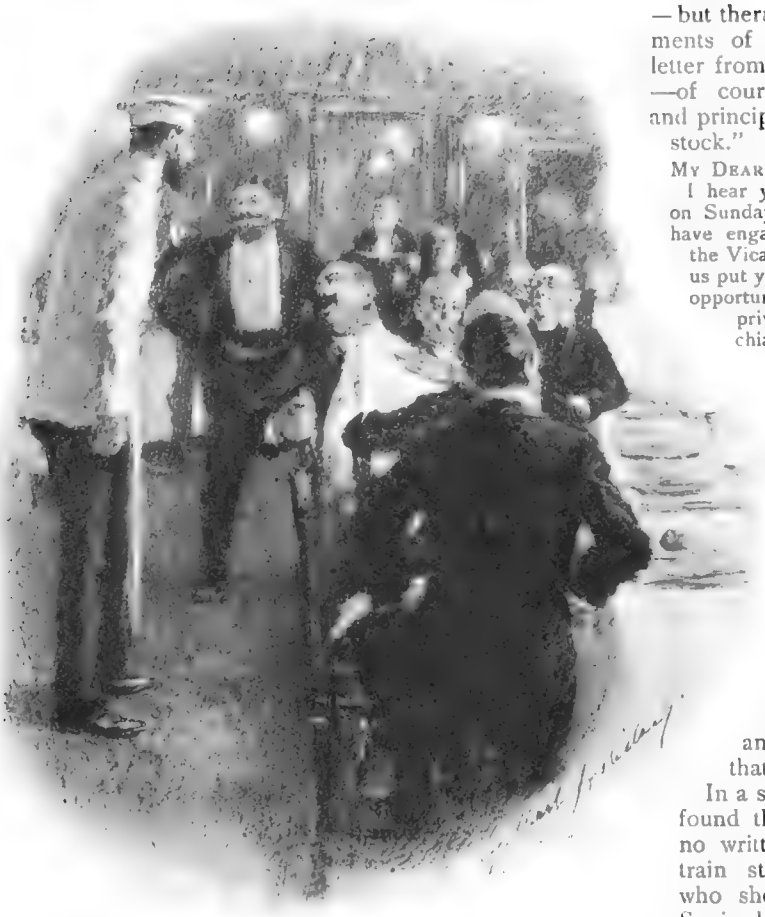

The Prince turned round to the man, who appeared a little nervous.

ordinary linen in his pocket—adjusted them on his aristocratic nose, and proceeded to read the packet of correspondence that he had received that morning.

Only two letters out of the batch concern the present narrative, and both of them bore the Claystock postmark. Both of them, also, were intent on the same purpose, to wit, the offering of hospitality to the Bishop of Frattenbury, who was to take a Confirmation at the parish church the following Sunday afternoon. The first was from the Vicar, asking his lordship to stay the night with him.

"Ah," remarked the Bishop, "Metcalfe is a very worthy man, and I believe that he has done good work at Claystock. But, if my memory serves me aright, I heard some rumour about him a time ago—I can't quite remember what it was. I wish one could keep more in touch with one's distant clergy, —but there are so many engagements of importance. Ha—a letter from my old friend Trevor—of course—he is the squire and principal landowner at Claystock."

MY DEAR BISHOP,

I hear you are coming this way on Sunday. I don't know if you have engaged yourself to stay at the Vicarage, but, if not, pray let us put you up. I rather want the opportunity of a talk with you in private—about certain parochial matters.

Yours ever,
ANDREW TREVOR.

"Let me see," said the Bishop to himself, none the less condescendingly because he was alone, "I should like to stay with Trevor. I might have luncheon with Metcalfe, and go on to Trevor's after the service. I can answer both letters to that effect in the House."

In a short time, however, he found that one letter needed no written reply, for as the train stopped at Claystock, who should get in but the Squire himself?

"It's about our Vicar," said the latter, after the preliminary greetings were over. "I'm much concerned about him."

"Why?" asked the Bishop, a little sharply, for he did not encourage criticism of his clergy from laymen—even if those laymen were his intimate friends.

Whereupon Trevor told him about those tri-weekly absences from Claystock.

"There's a mystery about the man," he said, "and people will talk, you know."

"Does the parish suffer?"

"Well—er—not exactly. But is it right that a parish priest should take himself off three days a week?"

"What do you suspect him of?"

"Oh, nothing—of course," returned the Squire, with much, however, implied in the tone of his voice. "But when a man habitually leaves his work and refuses to say why—well—it's rather strange, and we don't like it."

Whatever opinion the Bishop, who was a

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ittle vexed, had on the matter, he merely replied:

"Am I to take this as a formal complaint from you on behalf of the parish, Trevor?"

"Oh, certainly not—I'm only speaking to you as a friend."

"Of the Vicar?" asked the Bishop grimly.

"Well—er—*yes*, if you like. It is a pity that he should be talked about. Don't you think so?"

"I think," replied the prelate, who had a strong sense of justice, "that if you really have anything against him it is your duty to bring the evidence before me. If not, you can hardly expect me to take any action—especially as he appears not to be neglecting his work in Claystock."

Trevor rather subsided under this rebuke, but the Bishop was secretly ill at ease, for any lack of harmony in one of his parishes was always a worry to him.

However, it passed out of his mind for the time, and the gracious and subdued applause with which the wearers of coronets greeted his speech put him back into his good temper, and he was in a very happy frame of mind when he took a hansom to that famous restaurant know as "Carroll's," where the dinner was to be held, which frame of mind was made still more happy when, upon being introduced to Prince Ehrenstein von Rützenthal, the latter exclaimed—in English that was not so perfect as his knowledge of ancient Verb Roots:

"Ach! It is to me much honour to meet one whose highly commendable treatise I have already with much pleasure perused. If you shall allow me I will into my language for publication translate it."

His Serene Highness was a red-faced, round-bodied specimen of a Saxon, with eyes that twinkled hugely as he surveyed the festive board and tucked his serviette into his collar with the air of a man who meant business. He sat at the right of the chairman, Professor Baldwin, a little shrivelled-up, baldheaded antiquary, with a voice that piped out jerky sentences as from a phonograph.

On his left was the Bishop, courtly and dignified, waving aside the sherry that the waiter obsequiously offered him, and, rather ostentatiously asking for water, for his Lordship was a strict abstainer from alcohol.

There were oysters—His Serene Highness wished there were more—turtle soup—various fish *à la* various French names—entrées—His Serene Highness tried them all—and then, borne in by the head waiter and escorted by the manager himself—Mr. Robert Bland—came the dish for which Carroll's had been justly famous for considerably more than a century—the celebrated "Beef Steak Pudding," an enormous, smoking dish which shut the chairman out from view as it was solemnly placed before him.

The eyes of His Serene Highness Prince Ehrenstein von Rützenthal attempted to make an excursion from their sockets as he gazed on that mighty dish.

"Ach! Such a pudding never have I in my life before witnessed!" he exclaimed.

The Bishop turned to him with a smile.

"It is the *pièce de résistance* here," he said. "You must try some."

"With much pleasure shall I your good advice receive," replied His Serenity, making no attempt to resist the temptation to sniff the surrounding atmosphere as the pudding was opened and a cloud of savoury steam arose from its multitudinous contents.

The manager, standing behind his guests, smiled urbanely as he watched the learned Prince swallow the contents of his plate and then make the request of Oliver Twist. And he felt himself privileged to speak.

"Your Highness approves of our pudding?"

"Ach! but it is of the best. I like it much. I would the recipe into German translate and to my home convey it."

"I am afraid that is impossible," said the urbane manager, "the recipe is a secret; in fact, only one man—and he is our special *chef*—knows it."

"I imagined," said the chairman, "that you had lost the recipe some time ago."

"We did," replied the manager; "the late Mr. Carroll was the only one who knew it, and he always superintended the making of the puddings himself. He died very suddenly, and no trace of the recipe was found among his papers. But—er—well, we have, fortunately, recovered it."

"And this *chef!*" exclaimed His Serene Highness. "We often have a custom in Germany of giving to the cook for a special dish our thanks. Can I not do so now?"

The manager looked a little surprised.

"His Serene Highness wishes to speak to the *chef*," explained the chairman.

"Ach! Yes—it is that which I wish. I would the *chef* much congratulate, and he will no doubt as an honour receive it."

For a few moments the manager hesitated, a troubled look upon his face. Then he said:

"I will ask him to come."

The buzz of conversation continued as the manager left the room. Presently he returned,

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followed by a man in white, with snowy cap and jacket, a slight, dark man, with pointed beard and thin moustache.

"The *chef*, Your Highness," said the manager.

The Prince turned round to the man, who appeared a little nervous.

"Ach! That is good! I have sent for you, for your pudding to congratulate you. Many times have I of such like puddings partaken"—he looked it!—"but never have I of so rich a specimen the flavour so much enjoyed."

It was a great compliment from a great man. But the *chef* heeded it not. His eyes had suddenly fallen upon the Bishop of Frattenbury, just as that prelate, adjusting his *pince-nez*, had turned in his chair and caught his gaze.

As he did so, the Bishop gave a slight start, and sat as one petrified. For in that white-capped *chef* he recognised the Reverend Stephen Metcalfe, Vicar of Claystock!

The two men looked at each other for a full minute.

"So! I wish it were permitted the list of ingredients to reveal!" went on the ponderous German. "Sir, I have the honour to make you much thanks!"

The *chef* with an effort turned to him.

"I hope Your Highness liked it," he said feebly.

"We have enjoyed it exceedingly," said the Bishop, with just the vestige of a twinkle in his eye. "You must allow me to congratulate you as well!"

"I am much obliged to you, my lord."

Then the Bishop turned to the table and poured himself out a glass of water. It was noticed that he was lost in thought for some minutes afterwards, but he never said a word.

Only, that night he wrote and refused Trevor's invitation, saying he had changed his mind and was going to stay at the Vicarage after all.

* * * * *

The Confirmation was over, and the Bishop sat in a comfortable arm-chair in the Reverend Stephen Metcalfe's study. His countenance wore a half-stern, half-amused expression.

For he was listening to the Vicar's explanation.

"You see, my lord," said the latter, after he had told the Bishop his troubles, "I was nearly desperate. Then I read in the paper that "Carroll's" had lost the recipe of the famous pudding. I was interested, because it had been originally stolen from my great-grandfather, by a valet of his named Carroll, who had copied it and ultimately made his fortune out of my ancestor's invention."

"I begin to understand," said the Bishop. "You had the original, I suppose?

"Yes, my lord, written in Latin in my grandfather's hand."

The Bishop looked a little stern as he asked:

"But why could you not have disposed of it for a round sum? I could have understood that course of procedure, while—" and, in spite of himself, a smile quivered about the prelate's mouth as he thought of that white cap and jacket.

"Because the family honour was involved," replied the Vicar. "At the end of the recipe"—which he now handed to the Bishop—"my great-grandfather distinctly states that it was his wish that it should never go out of the family."

The Bishop wiped his *pince-nez* and read the lines.

"I should have ploughed your ancestor for his execrable Latin," he remarked grimly. "Well?"

"I saw the manager of Carroll's and put the facts before him. He offered me a handsome sum—if it was the genuine recipe. I told him I was debarred from selling it, but that I would superintend the making of the pudding provided he kept my identity secret.

"He asked if I would make a specimen then and there. He sent for the ingredients, and I superintended the work—in a *chef's* costume into which I had changed in his room."

"You seem to have been able to take up the culinary art at a moment's notice, Mr. Metcalfe."

"My lord, poverty has often compelled me to practise at home."

"I have never aspired beyond making toast, and then I always burnt it," said his lordship drily, but there was a flash of deep sympathy in his eyes that showed he was keenly alive to the pathos of the case.

"I shall never forget," went on the Vicar, "the anxious time I spent awaiting the verdict. I felt my wife's health was at stake——"

"At a beef steak, so to speak," murmured the Bishop.

"At length Mr. Bland came in and told me that his customers said it was the genuine thing. He offered me generous terms, and has kept my secret faithfully—providing me with a private room in which I have changed three times a week since."

"And you obtained the post without the

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manager requiring a testimonial of character from your Bishop!"

His Lordship of Frattenbury had lighted his pipe, and was smoking fast. The explanation had been given, and the judgment had to be pronounced. It was with a kindly look that he turned to the Vicar.

"Mr. Metcalfe—I wish—I wish you had told me of your troubles. As it is I sympathise with you, and I admire your courage. Not many men would have had the pluck to do what you have done. Now I am going to ask you to resign your—er—appointment at Carroll's, assuring you that you shall not suffer by so doing."

"I resigned it on Tuesday night, my lord, and——"

Here the bell rang for dinner.

"May I ask you to say nothing to my wife on the matter, my lord?" said the Vicar, as he led the way into the dining-room.

Mrs. Metcalfe, strong and well, took her place at the foot of the table. The second course was put on.

"This is lamb, my lord," said the Vicar, "may I help you—or would you prefer—?"

"Yes—I will trouble Mrs. Metcalfe for a piece of that beef steak pudding."

"I hope you will like it," said Mrs. Metcalfe, as she cut it open; "it is made from an old family recipe."

"Which I am sure does honour to the family," said the Bishop of Frattenbury, as he tasted it."

"I am *so* glad you like it. I'll tell you a secret my lord—yes, Stephen—I *will*. Whenever we have the pudding my husband comes into the kitchen, and insists upon superintending the making of it."

"Dear *me!* You don't say so!" exclaimed his lordship, elevating his eyebrows.

A few days later he wrote to the Squire as follows:

My Dear Trevor,

I think it right to tell you that I know the reason of Mr. Metcalfe's journeys to London, and have commended him for them. I may tell you that he will probably soon cease to be your vicar, for I am offering him the living of Hurlington—a more important and lucrative post than his present one. I think this will be sufficient to contradict any malicious reports about one whom I consider to be a most excellent man.

Yours ever,
G. Frattenbury.

"I might have added 'a most excellent cook,'" said the Bishop to himself, with that smile of grim humour that was often his saving point.

THE EVOLUTION OF A POEM.

Stage One.

To Chloe.

Those rosebud lips on Chloe's face,
The peach-bloom cheek where dimples grow——
My one delight is just to trace
Those dimples of my darling Clo.

["Declined with thanks."—Editor *Shiver*.]

Stage Two.

To Mary.

Those rosebud lips on Mary's face,
The peach-bloom cheek where dimples stray——
My one delight is just to trace
Those dimples of my darling May.

["Declined."—Editor *Lifebuoy*.]

Stage Three.

To Any Girl.

Those rosebud lips on my love's face,
The peach-bloom cheek (of which I dream),
Owe all their charm to just a trace
Of Jenkinson's A1 Face Cream,
Of all Chemists, 6½d., 1/- & 2/6.

["Received with thanks, £1 1 0.
"Tennyson Snooks."]

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MR X —HIS PAGES.

July—when strawberries are juicy!
The stripling floats, as in a dream,
Sequestered in a punt with Lucy,
Her cheeks like ming'ed fruit and cream.
Both dangle, careless, glad, sans souci,
Their fingers in the stream.

And "Mr. X," that skilful wizard,
Works just as eagerly and well
In July sun or wintry blizzard.
He hastes his little tale to tell.
Then off he breaks it—like a lizard,
And bids you all farewell.

Puzzle Penknives or Packs of Royal Playing Cards will be given as prizes to readers who forward *new* puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X" and wishing for a reply, must inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of The Royal Magazine), 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Another Curious Bill.

Curious bills continue to be shed on "Mr. X" by kind readers like the gentle rain of heaven. Here is the latest specimen:

The parish pump needed repair, and the job was given to the village blacksmith, that handy man. He sent in his bill as follows:

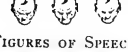
To repair of Parish Pump, Time, Materials, etc. ... £5

Naturally, the Vicar and churchwardens made representations to the blacksmith, asking if he would consent to keep the village pump, and say no more about it.

They then received another bill, as follows:

	£	s.	d.
To repair of Parish Pump, Time, Materials, etc. ...		16	0
Knowing How to Do It	4	4	0
	£5	0	0

This bill was paid, according to "Mr. X's" correspondent, and "Mr. X" scorns to doubt his word.



Figures of Speech.

2 lovers sat beneath the shade,
And 1 un-2 the other said:
"How 14-8 that you, be-9,
Have smiled upon this suit of mine!
If 5 a heart, it palpit-8-s 4 you,
Your voice is mu-6 melody;
'Tis 7 2 be your loved 1, 2;
Say, O-y nymph, wilt marry me?"
Then lisped the nymph: "Why, 13-ly!"

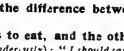
Q. Why is a reporter like a chicken?
A. Because he scratches for a living.

Q. What is the difference between a hungry boy and a glutton?

A. One longs to eat, and the other eats too long.

[Ed Royal (*ponderously*): "*I should say, from my experience of boys, that* both *eat too long.*"

"Mr. X" (*who knows his place*): "*Ha, ha! Ha, ha! Very smart, very smart indeed. Ha, ha: Ha, ha!*" (*Exit, still laughing.*)]



The Difference.

Maudie: "Jim, dear, what is the difference between two millionaires, two pianos, and two glue pots?"

Jim: "Oh, yes. If I say I don't know, you'll say I'd be a fine chap to send out to buy a millionaire, or a glue pot."

Maudie (with a merry laugh): "No, Jim, that's *quite* wrong."

Jim: "Well, I give it up."

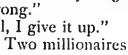
Maudie: "Two millionaires can play two pianos, and two pianos can play two million airs——"

Jim (interrupting): "So can one when *you* get to work on it."

Maudie: "*Jim!*" (Pause.)

Jim: "Well, and what about the glue pots?"

Maudie (nastily): "That's where you stick."



Seeing the Sights.

Little Boy (to his mother, while both are on a visit to London, pointing to Big Ben): "Muvver, do you see that big clock over there?"

Mother (beaming on her little son): "Yes, darling?"

Little Boy: "So do I, muvver."

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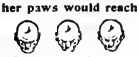
A Problem.

Brady's cat went up a tree
Which was sixty feet and three;
Every day she climbed eleven,
Every night she came down seven.
Tell me, if she did not drop,
When her paws would reach the top?



A Holiday Episode.

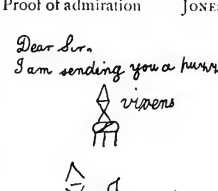
Old Gentleman (benignly): "Do I take the train for Brighton here, my little boy?"

Little Boy (lighting a cigarette): "Better not take it, guv'nor, there's been a lot of trains missed here lately."

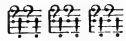
(Old gentleman shakes his head and commences reminiscences of "his young days.")

From a Youthful Admirer.

"Mr. X" has always claimed to be the friend of old and young. Proof of admiration on the part of his young readers is afforded by the adjacent reproduction of a letter from a very young reader. The puzzle consists of the word "vixens," arranged in a cabalistic and cryptic manner. It mystified "Mr. X" not a little, and but for the solution thoughtfully appended, he would to this day be under the impression that it was a design for an hour-glass that could be hung up or stood on the floor at will. The "V" rests on the "I," which rests on the "X," which rests on the "N," which rests on the "E." The "S" is on top of the "N."



There only remains to "Mr. X" the pleasant task of congratulating his little friend, which he does from the depths of his large heart.



The Fruit of Ill-Doing.

Pink (glancing up from his newspaper): "I see a man has been fined £5 and costs for eating fruit in a railway carriage."

Gray: "How untruthful you are!"

P k: "It's a fact, I assure you."

Grey: "Well?"

P k: "He was trying to gnaw the *date* off his ticket. You see it happened to be for 1906.'

Surely!

Herbert: "Sam, can you divide twenty by one and obtain nineteen for an answer?"

Sam: "No, Herbert, of course not. Pshaw!"

Herbert (producing pencil and paper:) "But see; here we have XX. Divide it by I, and lo! XIX. Now, supposing I had made this little matter the subject of a wager—let us say five shillings—you would have lost money, Samuel. Let this be a warning to you in the future."

(Sam throws a book at him, and the meeting then adjourns.)

His Vehicle.

Smith (to Jones, who has not visited his club for some time): "Well, old chap, where have you been all this time?"

Jones: "Oh! I've been doing a bit of travelling lately, and finished up by seeing a piece of Africa; and, I say, I crossed the Niagara Falls in a—there, I was just going to tell you what I crossed the Niagara Falls in! Can any of you fellows guess?"

Smith: "Never in a boat?"

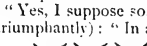
Jones: "No. Try again!"

Blarney: "An airship?"

Jones: "No. Something more aerial than that! Give it up?"

Smith: "Yes, I suppose so."

Jones (triumphantly): "In a dream!!"



The Reason

Willings: "I hear they are not going to have lamp-posts any longer in Regent Street."

Billings: "Why not? It is disgraceful. It is putting a premium on robbery and murder. It is——"

Willings: "Hush, Billings. It is considered, and rightly, that the lamp-posts are already long enough."

ANSWER.

A Problem: As each day and night the cat climbed 11ft. and came down 7ft. the daily upward gain was 4ft., and thirteen days would bring her 52 ft. up the tree. On the fourteenth day she mounted the remaining 11ft. and was at the top so that, the subsequent coming down notwithstanding, she touched the top in fourteen days.

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The Girl who Laughed.

The Story of a Good-hearted Tomboy.

By Owen Oliver.

"We can have coffee in the drawing-room if you like," Aunt Mary proposed, when dinner was finished. "There is no one to knock it over to-night."

"She only did it once," Aunt Julia protested mildly.

"Twice," Uncle William corrected. "Once when she was playing with the cat, and once when she fell over John's foot, if you remember."

"I remember her falling over my foot," Uncle John said with feeling. He suffered from gout. "I had forgotten about the coffee."

"The stain is under the skin rug," Aunt Mary explained. "She shifted the furniture to hide it. She is sensible in some ways, but her spirits are so terribly high. She seems to laugh at everything from morning till evening."

"She is only sixteen," Aunt Julia apologised. "She can't help being young."

"And we can't help being old," said Uncle William. "I don't blame the child; but it's trying. . . . Yes, Mary, I think we might have the coffee in the drawing-room. It will be like the times before the invasion!" That was their name for the historical day when Phyllis, round-faced and friendly and fourteen, had come among them. "Shall I help you, John?"

"Thank you, William. As Phyllis isn't here I should be glad of your arm, if you wouldn't mind. We were a little too old to have a young girl to look after. That is the fact of the matter, I think, William. It is worse for Mary and Julia of course."

"Nobody can say that we have not done our duty by her," Aunt Mary asserted.

"Perhaps we ought to have been more strict; but we have tried to be kind to her."

"I think *she* has tried," Aunt Julia pleaded.

"My dear Julia," Uncle William said, "nobody is blaming her. It is the old story. 'Youth and crabbèd age cannot live together.' Not that we are crabbèd. She hasn't been repressed in any way. Indeed, I am not sure that she stands in sufficient awe of us. I think I have heard her call you 'Judy.' Ah, Martha! *You* will know where my pipe is."

"Not nowadays, sir," Martha said severely, as she put down the coffee. "Miss Phyllis hides it away so that no one else shan't get it for you."

"Ah!" he said. "Umph! I must have a cigar, I suppose. Try one, John. They're some of those I got for the company's dinner. Hides it, does she?"

"There was a time," Martha remarked, "when I could lay my hands on everything

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in the house; but that's altered these two years." She passed on to Uncle John. "Shall I put the chairs to guard your foot, sir?" He had made a rampart round himself since Phyllis tumbled over him.

"It will not be necessary to-night, Martha," he decided,

"No, sir." Martha nodded grimly. Miss Phyllis was a "visitation," she frequently remarked to the cook and the housemaid, and they'd no business to encourage her in the kitchen. Encouraged or otherwise, Miss Phyllis paid them a visit every evening, and acted and danced skirt dances while the cook and the housemaid held their sides. She generally ended by attempting to make Martha dance; and she always addressed her as "my faithful Martha!" Martha had declared frequently that she would not put up with it any longer, and would speak to Miss Mary the next morning; but she never had.

"William has put the case very correctly," Aunt Mary stated, when Martha had gone. "We wish to do our duty by Norah's child, but we are none of us very strong, and we are scarcely fit to bear the infliction of a wild young creature in our peaceful household."

"She is like her mother," Aunt Julia mentioned. "Norah was always lively."

"Lively isn't the word for Phyllis," Uncle William groaned.

"She is exuberant," Uncle John pronounced. "Exuberant. This morning I actually caught her—but I promised I wouldn't say anything, so you mustn't mention it to her—*she was sliding down the banisters!*"

"In short," Aunt Mary summed up, "she is a great responsibility, and one that we are scarcely equal to undertaking. I don't see why her father's relatives should not take a turn with her."

"I shouldn't mind if it weren't for my nerves," Aunt Julia stated. "She doesn't understand, poor child."

"If someone remonstrated with her," Uncle William suggested, "she might be a little less—er—exuberant."

"Mary would be the best one to speak to her," Uncle John pronounced. "She is really growing old enough to give up laughing at everything. She should think a little."

"You can't make young people think," Aunt Mary stated. "She is what she is; and she's poor Norah's child. No, John, I can't see my way to curbing her spirits; but she is a great trial."

Uncle William blew a smoke ring thoughtfully.

"Suppose you ran over and saw the Carsons, Mary? You could hint that, as her paternal relatives, they had a right to have her in their turn. You'd know how to put it. . . . I never get through the *Times* in the evening when she's racketing about. Why, last night I missed a whole page; the one with the insurance case on it!"

"I have only solved eleven problems out of thirteen this last quarter," Uncle John observed. "She *will* try to help me, and—" He shook his head. "She means well, of course; but she has no idea of chess; none at all."

"She has broken a good many things lately," Aunt Mary added. "When she was learning to throw up that—what does she call it, Julia?"

"Diabolo," said Aunt Julia. "The child must do something, and we're dull company for her. She catches it very nicely now."

"I'm not blaming her," Aunt Mary said, "but ourselves for having her."

"No, no," Uncle William interposed. "I don't consider that we're to blame. Someone had to look after her, and I wouldn't be a party to sending her away to school, or anywhere where she would be repressed; but the Carsons would be good to her. They're very 'exuberant' themselves. She'd be in her element there."

"Just so," Uncle John agreed. "Just so. *Would* you mind getting me the chessmen, William, as Phyllis isn't here? I'm sorry to trouble you."

"No trouble, John, no trouble. . . . There seems to be a black pawn missing."

"Phyllis!" Uncle John groaned. "She pocketed it by mistake the other night, and she cannot find it. She gets me a draught instead. . . . Thank you, William."

"She's always losing things," Aunt Mary sighed. "There's my thimble, the one that was cousin Ellen's. I'd had it for thirty years."

"I can understand her losing a thimble," Aunt Julia said; "but how she managed to break my little scissors I *don't* know. I had them before she was born. I really think the Carsons ought to have her for a time. She's their niece as much as ours."

"She does not realise the importance of things," Uncle William complained. "Yesterday she destroyed my 'Financial Supplement.' It appears that cook's niece brought her little boy here; and Phyllis wanted some paper to make a cocked-hat for him! There was 'nothing on it but a lot of silly figures,'

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she said! Really, I don't see why the Carsons should not have their turn."

"She wouldn't have taken it, if she had realised that you wanted it, William," Aunt Julia protested.

"I know, I know!" Uncle William said testily. "The point is that she does *not* realise."

"A letter for you, Miss Mary," Martha announced; "and is anyone to go for Miss Phyllis, please?"

"No, thank you, Martha. Mrs. Norris is going to leave her here. . . . The letter is from the Carsons." She made a gulping sound.

"What is the matter, Mary?" Aunt Julia asked.

Aunt Mary laid the letter down, and drew a deep breath.

"They want Phyllis," she said. "For good!"

There was a solemn silence.

"It isn't fair," Aunt Julia said at last. "She's Norah's child, and as much ours as theirs."

"More," said Uncle William emphatically. "It is the mother that counts. I should refuse absolutely."

"Legally," said Uncle John, "the father's people have the first claim; but since they've left her to us ever since poor Norah—I should resist it. Certainly I should resist it."

"They do not make it a matter of contention," Aunt Mary stated. "They propose that Phyllis should choose. They think that she must be rather a tax upon us——"

"What do they know about it?" Uncle William demanded angrily.

"Why don't they wait till we complain?" Uncle John wanted to know.

"Nobody can say we've ever grudged her anything," Aunt Julia protested. She was wiping her eyes. "She has had the best of clothes, and the best of teaching, and her own way in everything."

"They acknowledge that," said Aunt Mary. "It is a pleasant letter. Margaret is a pleasant woman; though she can't feel to the child like her own mother's people, of course. She knows that we shall advise the child for her good, she says; but we should remember that young people want young companions, and——"

"Twice a week she has someone to tea," Aunt Julia interrupted excitedly. "Never less!"

"And that she has several somewhere about Phyllis' age, so that it would be more cheerful for her. I—I daresay it would——"

"It would be better for her," Aunt Julia owned miserably. "Norah was always lively, and Phyllis is like—like Norah, when—she was the baby, and we—we were always good to her."

"Ye-es." Uncle William fumbled for the matches. He had let his cigar out. "I remember how we taught her to walk. Lumps of sugar round the chairs! . . . I—we're old. I daresay it's been dull for her. We've tried to make allowances, but I suppose we're a bit fidgety. What we said to-night proves it. . . . Dash this cigar! It won't light. Well, we've only grumbled among ourselves, not to *her*. We— What do you say, John?"

"I—I can't solve the confounded thing." Uncle John swept the chessmen into the box with a rattle. "We've got to do what's best for the child, of course. I should give her the letter without comment, and let her choose."

"If she thinks that we don't want her to go," Aunt Julia said, "she won't. She is very feeling—when she thinks."

"She won't think," Uncle William said. "Why should she? We're just fussy old people, who—I'm hanged if we've been fussy with the child!"

"I don't know," Aunt Mary sighed. "We haven't meant to be, but— What is it, Martha? . . . It's no use whispering. I can't hear. . . . May you light a fire in Miss Phyllis' room? Now, have I ever objected to your doing anything for Miss Phyllis? Have any of us? . . . Yes, yes. It was quite right to ask, Martha. Of course you may. . . . We—we shan't have her long. Her uncle and aunt Carson wish her to live with them, and—and it will relieve you of a great deal of trouble. . . . *What did you say, Martha?* . . . You forget yourself. . . . Don't mumble at *me!* . . . Miss Phyllis will please herself. You will kindly avoid mentioning the matter to her when she comes in."

"Servants are curious creatures," Uncle William declared, when Martha had swept out. "Martha has threatened to give notice once a week ever since the child came, and now— Well, well! You get used to people. That's Phyllis' knock. . . . Nobody could say she wasn't at home here if they heard her bang like that! . . . *You* tell her, Mary."

The door flew open, and a big, bonny girl, with a plump, laughing face, and dancing brown eyes rushed in.

"Oh, Uncle Bill!" she cried, "I took your old pipe in my pocket. Take that nasty

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"Oh, Uncle Bill," she cried. "I took your old pipe in my pocket."

cigar out of your mouth, and we'll kiss and make friends. There! Oh! I've had a lovely time! The concert was splendid; and we went shopping all the afternoon, and I've mended all my misdeeds—at least all yesterday's!" She laughed merrily. "Here's a lovely pawn, Uncle John. I *did* have to argue with the man to get an odd one. Let's see if it matches? It's just a tiny bit bigger, but I'll scrape it littler, and it's better than a draught, isn't it?"

"It's the best piece of the set, my dear," Uncle John said. "Far the best. . . . Thank you, Phil."

"Here's a thimble for you, Aunt Mary. It's silver. See! The mark's here. Let me try it on you. It's the right size, isn't it?"

"My dear," Aunt Mary said, "it is *exact!*"

Aunt Mary held up her finger, and blinked at the thimble.

"It is *exact!*" she repeated.

"Now, Judy dear!" Phyllis skipped round to her youngest aunt, and flourished a pair of scissors near her nose. "Aren't they a *ducky* little pair, Judy? The man said they were the best steel. I was very particular about it. I made Mrs. Norris laugh. If we had something to cut——"

"You can have the *Times*, Phyllis," Uncle William offered recklessly. His voice was a trifle husky.

"Oh, Uncle Bill dear!" The girl laughed. "As if I'd touch your sacred old paper—except the 'Financial Supplement!'" She laughed once more. "Here's a circular—Jones' Sale. Look! Don't they cut beautifully?"

"Beautifully, dear," Aunt Julia gasped. "I—I think there's an eyelash got in my eye."

"Let me see." Phyllis flopped down on her knees and examined Aunt Julia's eyes. "There's nothing in them," she pronounced. "It's a cold. You stay in bed to-morrow morning, and I'll bring up your breakfast."

She laughed, and sprang up.

"Now, Uncle Bill! Guess! . . . You never will! Here's the 'Financial Supplement'! I've begged it off Mr. Norris, because he doesn't save them. I didn't know you did, when I took it. Really I didn't."

"Bless you, child!" Uncle William said. "I—I think I've a cold, too."

"I believe you've all caught colds. I'll have to bring up all your breakfasts! What fun!" She clapped her hands. "*Do* stay in bed too, Aunt Mary. I shall be mistress then. It will be such a lark to give orders to the faithful Martha. *Won't* she be wild with me!" She laughed—as she always did at everything.

"There's a fire in your room, Miss Phyllis," Martha announced, "and I've put some supper on your little table!"

"Martha!" the girl cried. "You're a faithful love! I shall reward you to-morrow. I am going to be mistress, because they've got bad colds."

"Umph!" said Martha. It seemed that she had a cold too.

"I do like teasing Martha," the girl declared, smiling and pushing back her hair.

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"She doesn't really mind, only pretends to. Good-night, dears."

She made for Aunt Mary to commence her round of farewells, but Aunt Mary held up her hand.

"Wait a moment, Phyllis," she said. "I —*you* tell her, William."

Uncle William put on his spectacles and took up the letter and coughed.

"Your Aunt Carson has written to us," he announced. "She thinks that it would be more cheerful for you there. You would be with young people of your own age, and —your mother was bright and lively like you are, and—we wish you to be happy, of course, and—you must decide for yourself, my dear, and write and tell her."

"Oh!" Phyllis laughed, "It's jolly there! How long does she ask me for?"

"For always, my child," Aunt Mary said. Her cold seemed very severe. It had attacked the throat as well as the eyes.

"For—always," Phyllis repeated slowly. "Oh—h—h! I'll write now."

She walked over to Aunt Mary's little writing-table.

"You had better read the letter first," Uncle William suggested. "It is a very nice letter, and we wish to make no comment, except—your aunt is mistaken in thinking that you have been a trouble to us, or that we wish to get rid of you. We should not like you to think that."

"She had no business to suggest it," Aunt Mary said.

"None whatever," Aunt Julia cried vehemently.

"Gross impertinence," Uncle John growled.

Phyllis read the letter rapidly.

"She doesn't say that exactly," she protested. "She—she really is nice, you know."

"Yes, my dear," Uncle William said. "She is a good woman, and she will be good to you. . . . God bless you, my dear."

Phyllis nodded thoughtfully. Then she took up the pen and wrote quickly in her big, sprawling hand.

Uncle William lit a cigarette. His hand shook. Uncle John examined the odd pawn, dropped it, picked it up, dropped it again. Aunt Julia buried her face in her hands. Aunt Mary went across the room and sat beside her. Her arm went slowly round her sister's shoulder. She was not a demonstrative woman, and she had not done that since Phyllis' mother died.

"I did not think she would be *quite* so ready to leave us," she said under her breath.

There was a long silence except for the sprawling of the pen. At last Phyllis jumped up and knocked over the chair.

"There!" she cried. "It's done!"

She handed the letter to Uncle William. He glanced at it, wiped his glasses hurriedly, coughed, and read.

DARLING AUNT MAGGIE,

How very kind you are! It is always lovely at your house, and so jolly to be with you and uncle and Bob and Molly and Nan and Dick and Milly and little Jack and the dear baby. Please kiss him ever so many times for me. It makes it nice to have a lot to romp with, and I enjoy myself with you so much, and I am very, very grateful.

Only, you see, auntie dear, it's lovely here too; and you've got such a lot, and they've only got me. I don't wonder that you think I'm a dreadful worry to them, but *they* don't think so——

Uncle William paused to wipe his spectacles.

"I often wonder that you don't!" the girl said with her usual laugh.

"My dear girl!" Aunt Mary protested.

"My *dear* girl!" cried Aunt Julia.

"I was thinking of taking you to the theatre to-morrow evening," Uncle William observed.

"We'll all go to the opera next week," Uncle John promised. "I'll get a box."

"Oh!" cried Phyllis. "You—you faithful uncles! Go on, Uncle Bill!"

They have put up with me all the time I was young and a nuisance and broke things. Now I am quite old and sensible, so I am going to do things for them. I should like living with you, but I like living with them too, and I simply *couldn't* leave them. You see you have all your own boys and girls, and so you couldn't love me quite like they do; and please, auntie dear, I have to love them best because they love me best. So don't be hurt, and write soon. Good-bye, auntie dear, and thank you very much.

My best love to you and uncle and all of them, and lots of kisses.

Your loving niece,
PHYLLIS.

P.S.—Thank you, auntie dear, and uncle too.

Uncle William put the letter in its envelope and closed it.

"Excellent," he said, "excellent. Very nicely expressed. I'll send Ann with it at once."

"You'll have to give me a stamp, Uncle Bill," Phyllis represented, "because I've spent all my allowance."

"Certainly," he agreed, "certainly. She's getting a big girl, John—'old and sensible,' eh? I think we shall have to raise that allowance?"

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"Just what I was going to propose," said Uncle John.

"If we are a little fidgety sometimes, my dear," Aunt Mary said—and her voice shook—"we are—not so young. You are a great comfort to us."

"A *great* comfort," Aunt Julia added.

"You are all *dears!*" Phyllis asserted. She hugged them in turns, laughing all the time. "Fancy anyone thinking you'd like to get rid of me."

"Your supper's getting cold, Miss Phyllis," Martha announced severely, and Phyllis made a rush and swept her through the door.

"My faithful Martha," she began. Then she noticed Martha's eyes. "Why, what's the matter, Marty dear?"

"Some people have their feelings," Martha said with dignity. "I daresay *you* can laugh over it, but it isn't a laughing matter to them. They've put up with you and never grumbled, and come to that, so have I—and——"

"Now, Martha," Phyllis said, "it's no use you pretending that you want me to go, because you don't! Now—faithful Martha!" She took the old woman's arm coaxingly, and Martha burst into tears.

"You mean—you're going to stay?—Miss Phyllis, my dear! Your mother was always my favourite, and——"

Phyllis bent her young head down to the old one.

"There!" she said. "Of course I'm going to stay, Marty dear."

Then she ran upstairs. She brushed her eyes as she ran, but before she reached the top she laughed again.

The housemaid and the cook were in her room warming up the cocoa again.

"You're not going, Miss Phyllis?" they both intreated at once; and Phyllis sat on the bed with her arm over the rail and shook her head and laughed at them.

Phyllis sat on the bed with her arm over the rail and shook her head and laughed at them.

"There!" cried cook. "I *told* Martha there was no need to take on! I knew you better. I'm that *glad* you're staying, miss! I couldn't abear the place without you. You'll find the sandwiches just how you like them, miss; and there's something under the cover in the hearth. Good-night, Miss Phyllis."

"Good-night, miss." The housemaid was all smiles. "If there's no more I can do?"

Phyllis dipped into her pocket. The housemaid was not many years older than herself, and she always gave her some of her sweets.

"Chocolates, Annie," she said, and pushed them into her hand. "Good night. Good-night, cookie dear."

She laughed and waved her hand till the door closed. Then she brushed her eyes quickly and knelt down by her bed.

"Dear Lord," she prayed, "bless them all, and make me a better girl to them."

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FEATHERS

A Fascinating Study in the Wonders and the Mysteries of Birds' Plumage.

By Marcus Woodward.

"A bird is a feathered biped."

The old definition is a good one, simple and true; yet it might be more simple, and equally truthful. It would be enough to say "a bird is feathered;" for there is no other creature in existence that Nature has clothed in feathers. By its plumage, therefore, a bird is set apart from all the rest of creation. How many years have passed since the first feather broke through the skin of a bird is a question that we must leave to geologists, who reckon years not by centuries, but by æons, to answer. We may accept or not, as we please, the statement of men of science that birds are descended from reptiles, and that the skeleton of a Jenny Wren bears a near resemblance to that of a crocodile. There is no doubt, however, from the evidence of fossil birds, that extinct forms also possessed feathers.

Not until one examines a bird's plumage closely do its mystery and its wonder begin to be revealed. From glancing at a sparrow on a housetop, one would imagine that it is completely covered by its feathers, as the reader's head is evenly and completely covered (we hope) by hair. The first impression would be wrong. Feathers, instead of growing on almost every part of a bird, grow only in certain definite tracts, the intervening spaces being bare, or covered with down. Nature provides her birds with no unnecessary feathers, except when they may be unnecessary from any point of view but ornamentation. When ornament is her idea, she is lavish to excess, as witness the peacock's tail, and the plumes of the bird of Paradise.

An owl's feather. It is very thick and soft, for noiseless flight.
The black heron's feather, which is very suitable for a military headdress.
Feather of a crane, adapted for a trimming in a "severe" hat.
Argus pheasant's feather, shows the highest form decoration found in the animal kingdom.

Whence do the feathers spring? How do they grow? If you can answer the riddle of life, you may answer this question. A fair attempt might be made in this wise:

A bird's skin is composed of an upper and a lower section. The upper is horny on top and soft below, and the underlying section is filled with nerves. Through this under skin rises a growth which pushes through the upper one, a depression being formed round its base. This growth is supplied by the under skin with a nutritious pulp, and part of the upper skin presently turns into a tuft of stiff rays, tubed at the base. These rays eventually burst their coverings and push out into the world as barbs, which in turn have small barbs of their own, and so a down-feather is born. The "barb" is the backbone of the feather, and the small barbs are the fluffy part.

Now another growth, lower than the first, gradually develops and pushes the down-feather from its place. The tube at the base of the tuft of rays grows into a main

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shaft, and sometimes a secondary shaft is formed as big or bigger than the first. These shafts are the backbone of the feather proper, and have tiny shafts growing out on either side, which complete the feather as we know it. The tiny shafts are locked to each other by little hooklets, as may be seen if a feather is stroked the wrong way, when the hooklets are displaced.

How many of all who have watched a bird winging its way merrily through the air have ever imagined what a complicated process occurs before each of its numerous feathers comes into being! But the feather merchant, at least, appreciates their value, and takes care to get a good supply. He knows that, little thinking, or perhaps careless, of the slaughter they occasion, hundreds of ladies are eager to decorate their hats and themselves with the plumes of the great army of birds annually offered up as a sacrifice to Fashion.

The egret's plumage, for instance, is sold wholesale at £10 an ounce in the natural state, that is before it has been cleaned and prepared for millinery purposes.

A bird's feathers are so distributed as to give a maximum of protection, warmth, lightness, and smoothness of contour, and a minimum of waste of tissue and of size. One reason why birds require so elaborate a form of clothing is found in the vast number of environments they inhabit. Man for the most part walks and has his being on the dry ground. Birds also walk on the dry ground, but in addition they haunt bogs and morasses, they walk at the bottom of streams, they dive through the water, they swim on the rivers and seas, they inhabit trees, and they fly through the air. No other creatures are at home in so many different sorts of places.

A pheasant's feather, showing the after shaft.

A marabou feather, one of the finest examples of a plume feather.

The bare wing-quills of the cassowary. They might almost be mistaken for porcupine quills.

"Floss," or body feathers of the ostrich. Some of the harder body feathers of the ostrich sell wholesale for a halfpenny each.

The feathers are designed to meet two main purposes. The first is to keep the bird warm. If not warm no bird could fly in the icy coolness of the higher air. Feathers are non-conductors, and, therefore, maintain the temperature of the bird's blood when flying. So closely are they set together, that they maintain a bulk of warm air all round the body.

Warmth first—then lightness. What is lighter than a feather? The effect of the lightness of the feathers is that they lessen the specific gravity of the

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body. This they do partly by retaining a certain amount of air. The tough, light structures contain air, which communicates with the outer air. In this way the necessary degree of

Emu's feathers with two shafts. The shafts are of nearly equal length.

Plumes of the bird of paradise. The popularity of these feathers is leading to the extermination of the bird.

air pressure is kept up within the hollow quill. Birds are creatures of the air in more senses than that they fly. There is air even in their bones; their whole system, indeed, is permeated by air, and it is an extraordinary fact that a bird can take in no less than one-sixth of the whole bulk of its body in the form of air.

Birds that inhabit water rather than air are endowed with a special device for protecting the feathers and the body from cold and wet. This is an oil-gland, conveniently placed near either side of the tail, so that the bird can comfortably reach it with its beak, and so that it is protected from pressure. When the bird squeezes the gland with its beak, a thick, oily substance is produced, with which the feathers are preened, and rendered waterproof. One cannot help envying the ducks these precious oil-glands—or at least wishing that mackintosh-makers would discover the secret of the waterproof substance therein.

A feather produced, Nature rests. The formative substances, however, awake at need to replace a loss—as at the moulting seasons—the object of which is to keep the plumage in good condition. There are often two moulting seasons in a year—in the spring and the autumn. In their first year most birds put on a winter dress, differing in colour from their summer garb.

In the usual way the quills in the wings and tail are discarded in pairs, but not quite simultaneously, so that the bird is not deprived of the power of flight. But in the case of most ducks, geese, swans, and some rails and waterhens, all the quills are shed at the same time, and the birds cannot fly when moulting. In compensation, the males, when brightly coloured, and, therefore, conspicuous objects to their foes, often assume for several weeks a dress resembling the quieter-hued females—and so may easily hide themselves among the water-plants they frequent. Some birds have not only two but three moults, like the ptarmigan, which changes its breeding dress first to a greyish habit, then to a white.

The wire-like tail feathers of the bird of paradise, on which the barbs are nearly lost.

Cock birds generally have brighter colours than hens—but not always. A hen goldfinch is just as beautiful as her mate. Sometimes a hen bird is not so brightly coloured as a cock of her kind, but really more beautiful from the point of an artist's eye.

When in the nest, young birds often take rather after their mothers than their fathers; thus, it is very difficult to tell which of young chaffinches are cocks, and which hens; and there is a wide difference between the old hens and cocks. So with greenfinches—the hen is

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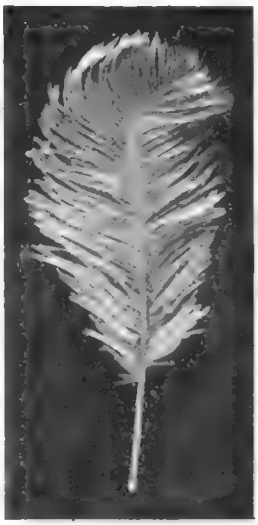
brown and sober in hue, while the cock is a beautiful olive-green. Some birds are as fine in their feathering in winter as in the breeding season; the bullfinch, for instance, with his gay, red breast and his black and white feathers, always gives a bright touch of colour to the wintry landscape.

Many birds of sober hue are yet very beautiful, and appeal strongly to one's æsthetic senses—as, for instance, the crested screamer, with its slatey-blue feathers, long crest, and striking black neck-ring. Those who neglect to make a study of birds and cannot tell a goldfinch from a rook, lose more than they are aware of.



Tail feather of a male ostrich, usually of a tawny colour.

The most wonderful colouring is found among the parrots. In one family—rejoicing in the name *Eclectus polychlorus*—the cock bird is chiefly green, with patches of red and blue; the hen bird is chiefly red, with patches of yellow and blue; while the young of both sexes are red. It would be extremely difficult to say whether the male or the female upland goose is the more beautiful bird—the female wearing a dress of rich brown, diversified by white; the male, a handsome coat of black and white.

But, generally, it is the cock bird that is the beauty, and the hen is more modestly robed.

Beyond all question is the fact that the beautiful feathers of cock birds are appreciated by women as ornaments, and this is the saddest of all facts about birds' feathers.

The love of feather-wearing is a peculiarly savage instinct—savage in that it involves a wanton destruction of bird-life, and savage in that primitive people possess it in a high degree. The love of the Polynesians for feathers is only equalled by that of Society ladies. Sandwich Island chiefs have caused the extinction of more than one lovely species of tropical bird by wearing feather robes; and women to-day are responsible, as has been said already, for a process of extermination that is rapidly going onward.

Almost every sort of bird is numbered among the victims of the feather trade. Small and beautiful birds like swallows, kingfishers, finches, goldcrests; noble birds like eagles; lovely birds of Paradise and humming birds; harmless owls and seagulls, pelicans and cranes—all pay toll to woman's vanity. The fashion for ospreys or aigrettes has made it almost certain that the egrets, relatives of the heron, will soon cease to exist. The plumes of 190,000 egrets were sold last year in Mincing Lane. Their plumes attain perfection only at the breeding season, when they are collected; hence the special danger of total extermination. There are, of course, "artificial ospreys"—made up of the less valuable portions of the genuine plumes. The chief rivals to the osprey are the plumes of Paradise birds, and the number of their skins sold last year in Mincing Lane was 28,301.

A rhea's feather, called "vulture" in the trade.

Most valuable of all feathers from a trade point of view are those of ostriches—and it is something to be thankful for that the trade in these feathers does not involve loss of life, though it certainly involves cruelty. Almost the entire

The feather of the lesser egret, known to the trade and public as "osprey."

Four shafts on a single cassowary quill.

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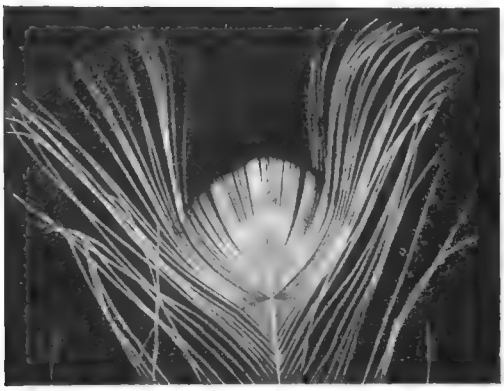
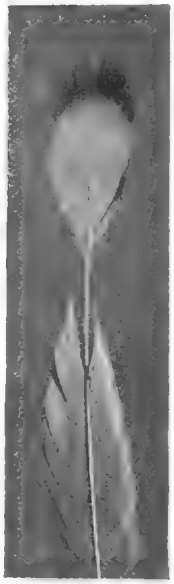


Traces of the "eye" in a white peacock's feather. Only a coloured illustration could do its beauty full justice.

plumage of the ostrich is put to one purpose or another, such as trimming hats or making feather boas and stoles. The male bird produces black feathers on the body, sable ones on the back, cream on the tail, and white feathers on parts of the wings; the hen is generally a drab colour, but possesses fine white wing-feathers. The wing-feathers are cut off close to the skin, but the smaller feathers are pulled out, the larger feathers being cut, not necessarily from motives of humanity, but because it is difficult to extract them.

In California, in parts where wealthy loungers are glad of any excitement, ostrich farmers advertise their "pluckings," and charge admission fees for the spectacle thereof. The birds are driven into narrow inclosures, are blindfolded, and then their feathers are cut and pulled; each time a feather is pulled the bird gives a spasmodic jump. A committee of ladies was formed not long ago to try to put a stop to the cruelty of the plucking process, but without avail. After the plucking, whilst the birds are still blindfolded, some amusement is obtained from small boys, who mount the birds, and attempt to ride them as they rush off on being released from the pluckers' hands to join their companions.

Ladies who wear ostrich feathers would do well to think on these things.

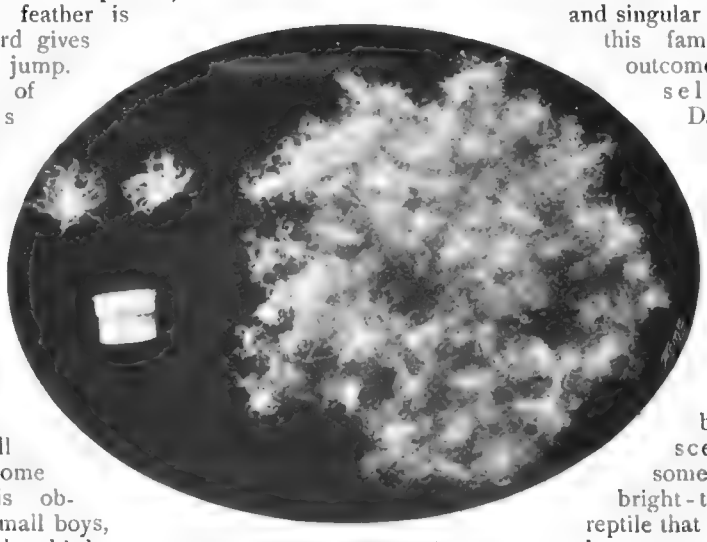


Tail feather of a mot-mot. The part of the feather which is missing has been picked off by the bird.

The loveliest of all birds—perhaps of all living things in Nature—are the humming-birds. "The minute, exquisite form," says Mr. W. H. Hudson, "when the bird hovers on misty wings, probing the flowers with its coral spear, the fan-like tale expanded, and poising motionless, exhibits the feathers shot with many hues; and the next moment vanishes, then reappears at another flower only to vanish again, and so on successively, showering its splendours not continuously, but like the intermitted flashes of the firefly—this forms a picture of airy grace and loveliness that baffles description."

No words, indeed, could describe the gem-like and metallic brilliance of the feathers—nor could painter ever hope to picture the birds as his eye sees them balanced before a flower, the swift motion of the wings appearing like a mist. Hardly more than one point of colour is visible at the same time.

Whether the iridescent tints and singular ornaments of this family are the outcome of sexual selection, as Darwin held, or of great vitality, is still an undecided question. Possibly, as Mr. Hudson has suggested, humming-birds are descended from some diminutive, bright-tinted flying reptile that lived in trees long ago.



Eider down, and the box that contained it. This illustration gives some idea of the great compressibility of the down.

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OBSESSION

When falls the night and nothing seems
Astir,
How often are my thoughts and dreams
Of *her!*
(*Dreaming* of her before the dawn
Doth break,
Thinking of her when in the morn
I wake.)

Who is she, then, this fairy fay,
This sprite
That haunts me waking, sleeping—day
And night?
A simple maid! how simple—ken
I well!
And yet more "dear" to me than pen
Can tell.

Is it her laughing eyes, her charm,
Her grace,
That fill me with this vague alarm?
Her face,
Rare in its youthful beauty—one
To please?
Her virtues? Nay! for she has none
Of these!

A sudden glance—a fleeting smile
Maybe—
Has fascination for awhile
For me?
Ah, no, alas! *this* thought my brain
Has vexed—
"What will the 'dear' Matilda Jane
Break next?"

R. C. Tharp

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The Melancholy History of What Happened During Our Visit.

WHEN that ass Wilson arrived at Crogger, Prowle & Co.'s office one morning, and invited us three—Bates, Simmons, and myself—to spend a week-end with him at his little place in the country, I at once refused; I was afraid Wilson would get "uppish" if I accepted; however, when I remembered that his young wife, who I always thought was rather sweet upon me before her marriage, might be really longing for a sight of me, I relented. I would not have deprived her of this simple pleasure for the world.

We got away early, Wilson personally conducting us: trains packed, and Wilson tried to secure a carriage to ourselves, but failed, as he always fails at everything. So I just tipped the guard a threepenny-piece, winked at him confidently, and told him to find us an empty carriage. He winked back, pocketed the threepence, and said: "Didn't I wish I might get it?" Fancy living on a line where the guards do that sort of thing!

Wilson's house is one mile from the station, and on reaching it we were welcomed by pretty Mrs. Wilson. I thought (I *may* have been mistaken) that she received me much more warmly than she did the rest. Bates and Simmons quite retired to the background, though, curiously enough, next day Bates said he thought her sweetest smile was reserved for *him!*—conceited ass, Bates. Some men make themselves positively ridiculous; they imagine every woman they see to be in love with them.

The house is an old, rambling building, about twenty miles from London, with quite rural surroundings; the garden abuts on fields and woods, and Wilson keeps a horse (on his wife's money, I suppose!), fowls, and pigs. He says they pay—I doubt it. I doubt everything that Wilson says. I am quite at home with pigs myself.

When I said this to Simmons he grinned and said: "Yes, you are." I wonder what he meant?

After dinner we played bridge. Wilson demurred at playing for money, but I overruled him. After all, I was the guest, and he only the host, so it was clearly for me to choose, and he had to give way. At the end of the evening I had lost 2s. 6d. Of course, I don't blame Wilson for *that*, but it didn't look well that a goodly portion of this (1s. 3d.) found its way into his pocket. I never like to see a man win his guests' money. Still, as I said before, I make *no* imputations. I know all about bridge, and it may have been *quite* accidental. I should never make myself unpleasant to Wilson, if only for his wife's sake. I pity her, married to an ass like that. I can't think how she looks so bright and happy over it. She might have had me.

That night I slept badly, and as soon as it was light, I dressed in a pair of Wilson's knickerbockers and gaiters and a check coat I found in my room—rather a bad fit, as Wilson is much bigger than I. I wore a soft felt hat of Wilson's, also too big for me. Then, seeing his gun, I slipped a couple of cartridges into it and sallied forth.

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Of course I know all about shooting, from being a volunteer; still, this was my first appearance with a shot gun. Seeing nothing to shoot at except rabbits, not one of which would sit still while I raised the gun to my shoulder, I entered the woods and saw two or three pheasants pretty close. Wilson had warned me that his landlord had all the shooting strictly preserved. Still, I really couldn't be subservient to Wilson in everything, and as to Wilson's landlord—hang Wilson's landlord!

I looked round cautiously—no one about, and two pheasants quite close. I was just stalking them, and had got within a few paces, when a fearfully loud "Bang!" caused me to drop the gun and yell. Something must have caught in the trigger and the thing went off of itself. I had nothing to do with it.

On looking fearfully round I saw, to my astonishment, that one of the pheasants had fallen to my unerring aim. Then there was a crushing of underwood, a rough hand gripped me by the collar, and a rasping voice roared:

"Hoh, my beauty! I've got you this time—poachin', an' caught red-handed!"

I tried to laugh it off at first. But it didn't work. The corduroyed ruffian never let me go, and demanded my name and address.

I unhesitatingly gave him Wilson's. After all, Wilson was my host, so it was his business to see to these little matters.

"You've nearly blowed the bird to pieces. I s'pose you really are Mr. Wilson?" (doubtfully) "I seem to remember these clothes. Well, I shall summons yer, an' if I ketches yer in these 'ere woods again, I shall knock yer bloomin' little 'ead orf!"

I had a crushing rejoinder ready, but, after one look at the savage's eye, forbore to use it. I retired through the wood, with the keeper's dirty hand on my sleeve, till we reached the gate. Then he shoved me violently through it and slammed it to again.

When I returned to the house I told Bates and Simmons all about it. To Wilson I merely said I had borrowed his gun to shoot rabbits.

"Hope you didn't disturb the pheasants?" he said, rather anxiously.

I whistled a tune to show that the pheasants were quite indifferent to me.

The rest of the party went to morning service, but I declined, saying I should find plenty of amusement about the place. I did—I set a rat-trap and caught my own fingers in it. I unlatched the barn door, and it blew open and knocked me down on my back. I accidentally left the pig-sty unfastened, and a sow and eight little pigs went careering through the garden, with Wilson's spaniel in hot pursuit; and, finally, in showing the groom how we military men in the City and Suburban Yeomanry mounted our chargers, I fell off the corn-bin and grazed my nose. After this I went indoors and read a book, marvelling how Wilson *could* live in such a beastly place. Everything always seemed to be going wrong.

When the rest returned from church, I perceived that Bates and Simmons had again fallen hopelessly in love with Mrs. Wilson, but their pretensions were naturally vain when I—I am not conceited, far from it—but really, Bates and Simmons! And yet, so obtuse are women, that when, during an accidental *tête-à-tête*, I looked at her with languishing eyes, eyes which spoke eloquently of the "might have been," she only smiled sympathetically, and asked if the mince pies hadn't agreed with me?

"I've a little treat in store for you," said Wilson to me during the evening.

My mind suddenly reverted to the impending summons for pheasant poaching, and I thought that very probably *I* had "a little treat in store" for Wilson.

"Yes," he continued, "the Marsh Green Harriers meet here to-morrow, and we'll all have a jolly good run with them. I suppose you've all got thick boots and sticks, 'the best mount for harriers,' as old Jorrocks says."

Running with harriers is all very well for fellows like Wilson, but a brilliant horseman (I have been through the military riding-school*) has ambitions beyond that. So I announced my intention of riding. Wilson looked at me in despair.

"But where are you going to get a horse?" he said dismayed, "and running's such good fun."

Fancy running after harriers being "good fun"! But Wilson always was an ass. I do him the justice to say he knows it. Sometimes you meet a man who's a consummate ass and doesn't even suspect it, don't you?

"Your harness horse will do for me all right," I said boldly. "I fancy I know all about horses, and I dare say I can screw him along somehow. You've seen me on a horse," I concluded, looking meaningly at Bates, who grinned and said:

* Quite true. He went in at one end and was kicked out at the other.—ED. R. M.

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"Yes, and off one, too."

Poor Bates; one can afford to pity people so petty as to recall a passing *contretemps* for the purpose of scoring off a friend.

Wilson still looked despairing, and made one more effort to dissuade me from riding.

"Better come with the rest of us," he urged. "I'll lend you the horse with pleasure, but he's not seen hounds this year—done nothing but harness work, and I'm afraid——"

Here I turned my back partly on him and hummed a tune. It is the only way to show Wilson that you've made up your mind about a thing. And, with a sigh, he desisted.

I must say—I am always, I hope, just to Wilson—that we passed a very pleasant Sunday. We had a good walk, and then went round the woods. I kept a careful look-out for gamekeepers, and felt relieved when we returned to the house and sat down to tea and muffins, without having encountered my opponent of the morning. A gamekeeper armed with police-court summonses and other deadly weapons is a thing to be avoided.

Next day, Wilson rigged me out in his own riding things. He did his best, but, of course, they didn't fit, and I gave a sigh of regret for my khaki uniform and puttees; I think they would have attracted some attention in the hunting field. However, I eventually presented a pretty smart appearance in spite of the very baggy white breeches and much-too-big boots. I wanted spurs, but Wilson absolutely declined to lend me any, saying the horse was already quite lively enough.

"Then I'll jolly soon tame him for you, my dear fellow," I cried jauntily. But Wilson only sighed and looked worried.

Hounds arrived punctually, and several men came in for a stirrup-cup. A lady, in a very neat riding-habit, took considerable interest in me. I heard her whisper to Mrs. Wilson, asking who I was. I think I look my best in riding clothes, and walked up and down the room once or twice, flicking my boot with my whip. Then I caught the words: "Poor little man, he looks quite lost in that coat, doesn't he?"

Mannerless creature!

A small crowd of foot-people had gathered round the front door, and the few of us who were mounted attracted all the attention. My brute would not stand still. After my first four ineffectual attempts to mount, the groom suggested a kitchen chair, but I angrily negatived this, and told him that, as I was too short—I mean the stirrup-leather was too short—to reach, he must give me a leg up.

Wilson held the horse, and, giving the groom my right leg, I sprang lightly up, and found myself sitting on the saddle facing the horse's tail. A slight titter from the crowd put me on my mettle. I quickly slipped to the ground again, gave my left leg to the groom, and this time I went right over the horse's back, and found myself standing on the garden path again. The crowd roared. It was most humiliating. I don't say it was Wilson's fault, but fancy his keeping such a ridiculous horse! At the next attempt I mounted, and sidled off into the midst of the pack.

"Take care, sir!" cried the Master, as my horse lashed out, "you might kill one of the hounds!"

"Oh, easily," I answered, smiling at his simplicity. Just as if there could be any doubt about *that!*

We trotted off to some turnips close by, and then separated and rode down the field, cracking whips to rouse the noble quarry. Wilson had lent me such an absurd hunting-crop that, when I tried to crack it, I overbalanced, and, but for the assistance of Bates, who was walking beside me, I should have fallen off. Nothing daunted, I tried again; this time I caught Bates a sharp "flip" on the ear with the whipcord, and he said awful things. Well, he shouldn't have been there.

Very soon a hare got up in front of the pack, and away we went. My horse immediately began to get unpleasantly excited.

Well, as I've said, I think I know something about horses; I haven't been through a course of military equitation for nothing. I grabbed up my reins, and as I did so the horse put his head down so suddenly that, but for my great skill, I should have been off. He pulled me right out of the saddle on to his neck, and I very nearly slid over his ears and sat on the turnips. However, I scrambled back into the saddle, and we raced away after the hounds.

At the end of the turnip field we jumped some rails. I jumped considerably higher than the horse, and rather in advance of him—that's my way, I always do it, so it was quite ridiculous of Simmons to assert, afterwards, that the horse had nearly jumped me off—mere jealousy, because I was the only one of our party mounted.

We crossed a big ploughed field, and here I had the pull of the foot runners.

At the far side of the plough, a formidable

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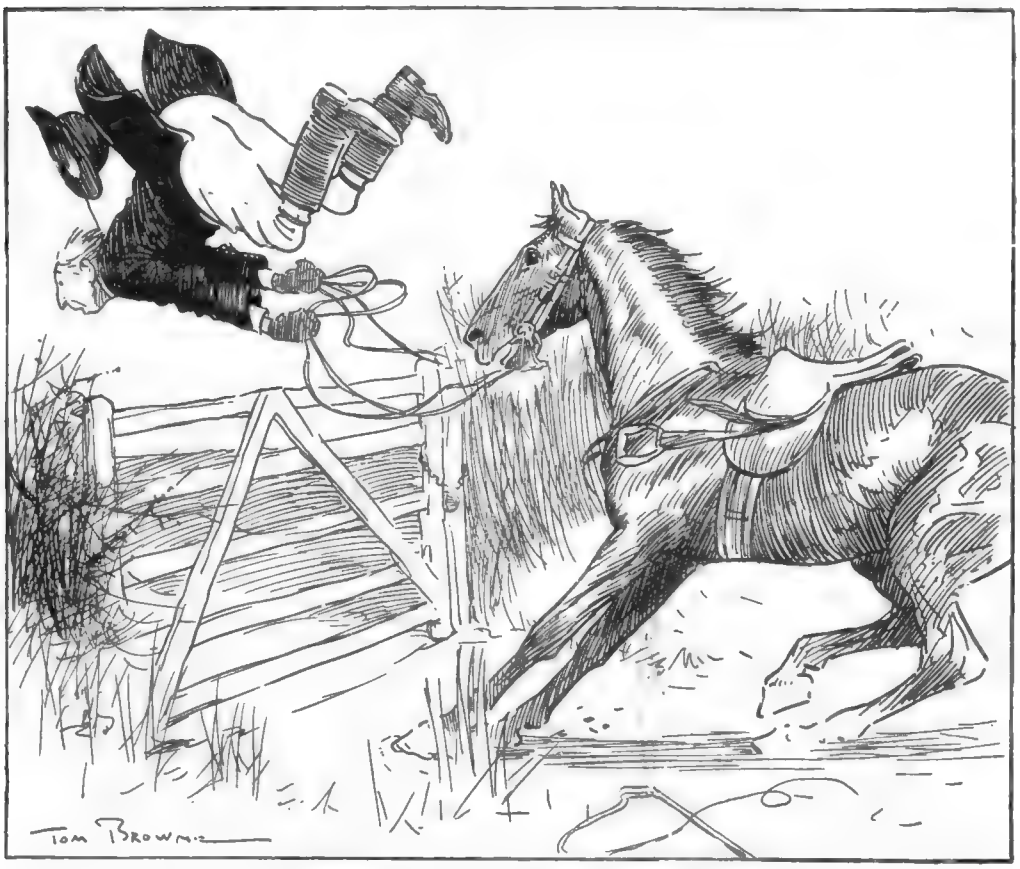

I **never halted for a moment, but sailed on, clean over his head, across the top bar.**

hedge confronted us, but luckily hounds checked after running a few yards beyond it. The Master came up and blew his horn to get them round him before making a cast; and seeing some hounds still hanging about in the field beyond, he shouted to me:

"You, sir, hi!—you there, I say, just ride over that fence and put 'em up to me, will you?"

Well, all my friends know the sort of fellow I am when danger looms, but I should scorn such a reckless act as jumping that fence in cold blood. So I stuck out my toes, squared my elbows, and quietly whistled, with my head turned well away until the Master bawled so loud that I *had* to hear him.

"So sorry," I shouted back, "but this is a friend's horse, and I don't like to risk him."

And just then that ass Wilson arrived, panting, and exclaimed:

"Oh, never mind that, he's an old hunter, and I'll take the risk."

Of course! just like Wilson, in his callous brutality. He'd risk the horse—not a word about his friend; the question of *my* safety never entered his mind. So I merely said:

"I'm waiting for Simmons and Bates; can't go on and leave them."

The Master exclaimed "skunk!" or "funk!" I don't know which, and galloped away furiously.

Hounds soon hit off our hare, which I suppose had "gone to ground," and off we went again. Somehow my horse kept going faster and faster, and we got nearer and nearer to the pack.

Then several men began shouting "Hold hard! hold hard, sir!" (which was absurd, as already I was hauling at the reins for dear life) and swear-words greeted me on every side. This was quickly followed by a chorus of yelps as my horse galloped clean through the pack.

The brute continued to bolt until we came to a locked gate. In my frigh——anxiety for the horse, I mean—I leant over his neck,

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fully expecting him to jump, but within six yards of the obstacle, and before I could catch hold of his mane, he stuck his toes into the ground, ploughing up two huge furrows, in his frantic efforts to stop himself.

But you know the sort of go-ahead fellow I am; it takes a lot to stop me when my blood's up; and so, although the horse stopped dead, *I* never halted for a moment, but sailed on, clean over his head, across the top bar, and on to my hands and knees into the meadow beyond. The horse, finding himself free, snorted, stuck his tail up in the air, and galloped off, leaving his bridle in my hand.

Two minutes later, Wilson and Bates, both breathless, arrived, and helped me up again.

"I'm awfully sorry——" began Wilson.

"So you ought to be," I interrupted sharply, "persuading one to go out on a horse like that."

He looked surprised.

"I was only going to say I was sorry you couldn't prevent him galloping through hounds; the Master's awfully angry."

I felt rather queer at this, but, after looking round and finding the Master was not in sight, I quickly recovered my *aplomb*, and said contemptuously:

"My dear Wilson, as if I cared what the Master says or thinks! When a fellow comes out for a day's hunting, he wants to be in the van!"

"Well, *I* thought you were 'in the cart,'" grinned Bates, "when the horse threw you over the gate."

I took no notice; Bates is always ill-natured.

"If the beastly horse had only jumped that gate," I resumed, "I shouldn't have had to do it by myself."

"Oh, I see," smiled Wilson.

Hate a man who smiles at a statement which the fellow who makes the statement must know the truth of better than the statem—than the fellow who makes—who states the state—oh, confound it all! I mean that they really thought that the horse had run away with me, when it was simply that I meant to be in front.

"I thought you had better not ride," began Wilson mildly.

"On the contrary, you actually lent me the horse," I replied. Hate a man who prevaricates; Wilson is always doing so.

The hare ran a ring, and very soon, hounds, followed by the whole field, were close up to us again. Wilson gave a man a shilling to catch the horse, but when he had brought him back I said I would rather not ride any more.

And then Wilson must needs ask what he should do with the horse?

"I'm not dressed for riding, you see, or I——"

"My dear fellow" (I really had to pull him up quite sharply for being so ridiculous), "is it my fault that you attired yourself in knickerbockers and stockings instead of breeches and boots? Why didn't you dress in riding-breeches when you got up?"

"Because there's not room for two people in them, and you had appropriated the only pair I had," he meekly replied, and that idiot Bates laughed aloud.

I had to get on and ride off home.

It was rather early in the day, so I determined to make a circuit, and then return for a *tête-à-tête* with charming Mrs. Wilson.

But, once on the high road, my brute declined to go in any other direction than home. I turned him round—then he turned *me* round. I hit him, and he retaliated with a hoist of his heels which knocked my hat over my eyes and sent me up his neck. When I got back again into the saddle, I reflected that it was beneath my dignity to engage in this sort of tussle—merely groom's work—so I simply let the animal go his own way, and in twenty minutes we were back again at the stable.

"Yes," I said, answering the groom's look, "we had a splendid run, and I jumped a five-barred gate seven feet high" (the groom gasped), "but the horse is not quite up to my weight, so I brought him home."

And then, feeling rather stiff, I straddled towards the house with the pleasing anticipation of a little harmless flirtation with Mrs. Wilson.

Going up the garden path, I cracked my crop merrily and cried "Yoicks!" in true hunting fashion. Then I pushed open the door and—walked straight into the arms of a large policeman.

Now, I am a bit of a dare devil, but still, I must confess that, with the memory of that pheasant and the fact that I was hopelessly outnumbered by the policeman—I mean, surprised by this police ambush, so to speak—I *did* experience a certain hesitancy. Casually whistling, I started to return the way I came. The policeman grabbed me by the coat tail and I was pulled up short.

"I'm waitin' to serve a summons on yer," he said in truculent tones. "Been at the squire's pheasants and got copped," he ended with a grin.

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The policeman grabbed me by the coat tail and I was pulled up short.

"But I thought you told me that the summons was for my husband?" Mrs. Wilson broke in anxiously.

"Well, ain't this Mr. Wilson?" asked the policeman.

That was my moment of triumph. My own prudence in giving Wilson's name instead of my own was manifest I looked at the man severely.

"You see, my good fellow, your guess is rather wide of the mark," I began sarcastically (I am said to be the most sarcastic fellow at Crogger, Prowle & Co.'s); "am *I* responsible for what Mr. Wilson does?" And I passed up the stairs to my room. Once there, I lost no time in changing my clothes and packing up. I thought that, perhaps, the pheasant affair could be much better settled in my absence. I would return to town forthwith, so as not to embarrass Wilson, as it were.

Without waiting to eat anything—I had quite lost my appetite—I quietly slipped out of the back door. Then I cut across the meadows at the side of the house and went on till reaching the hedge, scrambled over it, scratching my cheek with a long bramble, and falling over my kit-bag on landing.

I stumbled manfully on, over a ploughed field, crossing the furrows transversely to make a short cut to the corner. Here a fresh obstacle met me—a broad, deep ditch. I determined to throw over my bag and then jump the water. I hurled the bag across, and it just cleared the green, slimy ooze. And then the horrible thought flashed into my brain that, should I fall in, with no help at hand, I should certainly meet with a watery grave. I passed quickly in review my boyhood's happy days, the useful information gathered at my mother's knee, the play hours in the sunny garden of my youth. Then prudence overbore my natural fiery courage. I would *not* risk it!

But, unfortunately, I had parted with my "effects," and between us there was a great gulf fixed. I started round the field, slipping and sliding over the greasy clay, and at last found a spot where the deep ditch ended and a fencing of barbed wire took its place.

Over this I climbed painfully, and at the cost of an almost new pair of shepherd's plaid trousers, which caught in every barb—when I examined them there was more tear than trouser. Then I started after my bag again, but could find no trace of it. I spent ages feverishly hunting round, and then, the short afternoon already closing in, I abandoned the quest, almost with tears, and started once more for the station.

Three more ploughed fields, and, almost exhausted, I climbed a gate and thankfully alighted on the high road. Warned by my watch, I hurried on, taking the road to the left, which I reckoned would bring me to the station in about ten minutes.

After twenty minutes' fast walking I met a farmer. "No, no, this ain't the way to the station; you're comin' right away from it."

And so my weary walk recommenced. I had blisters on both heels, one sock kept

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falling over my boot, I was plastered in mud and clay—oh, confound that pheasant! All these misfortunes were due to that wretched fowl—and to my own modesty in putting Wilson forward instead of myself.

Walking, limping, and hopping, I reached the station, only to be reminded, on feeling in my pocket, that my purse, containing my return half ticket and every shilling I possessed, was locked up in the lost kit-bag! What was I to do for a railway ticket?

To think was to act; the train was standing in the station. So I rushed into an empty carriage and dived beneath the seat.

But even here my disasters did not end. Three or four people got in and, from my disadvantageous position, the smell of boots became almost overpowering. The journey to town seemed maddeningly slow, and my anxiety as we approached Vauxhall, where the tickets are collected, became positively painful. However, I was pretty certain I should not be seen, and, keeping quite still, hardly dared to breathe as the door was wrenched open, and "All tickets!" shouted in stentorian tones.

And then my cup was indeed filled to the brim, for a bucolical-looking individual, sitting immediately above me, pointed under the seat, and addressing the ticket-collector, said in tones savouring of Yorkshire:

"Better ask t' laad oonder ma seat whoy a' travels flat on stoomach loike, 'stead o' settin' oop loike t' rest? Ah felt 'un wi' ma heel" (the clown had already trodden twice on my fingers) "a whoile baack, but ah sed nowt."

The ticket-collector put his hand under the seat and hauled me out, amid the covert sniggers of the other passengers. In vain I told the fellow in haughty tones that I had a return ticket. Like the truculent gamekeeper, he observed that he should "summons" me. This time I gave my own name and address. Giving Wilson's had, up till now, been hardly a success.

* * * * *

Next morning, when we all met at Crogger, Prowle & Co.'s, I was rather standoffish to Wilson. I regarded him as the cause of all my sufferings.

"We were so sorry you hurried off yesterday," he began. "Of course the pheasant summons was a mistake." ("Was it?" I thought.) "I very soon put that right; the policeman fetched the gamekeeper to identify me. He came, and at once apologised, and said I was not in the least like 'the dirty little snipe,' as he called him"—(here Bates had a choking fit, whilst Simmons bent low over his ledger with shaking shoulders)—"who had blown the pheasant to bits. No doubt it was some bounder who had given my name instead of his own," Wilson blattered on. "We luckily found your bag and I've brought it up with me. All's well that ends well," continued this cheerful idiot. "But as they can't find the man to serve that summons on, they've applied for a warrant, and if they catch him he'll go to prison!"

That same hour I applied to the firm for a fortnight's sick leave, which I shall spend with an aunt who lives in the remotest part of Wales. I shall be a fugitive from justice, outlawed, in short, by the act of that ass Wilson.

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THE VOW.

"I'll love no more," I said, "love is but pain:
Henceforth 'gainst Beauty's wiles I shut the door!
She shall not have me at her feet again—
I'll love no more!"

Now, after many days, thy face I see,
And all my foolish boastfulness is o'er;
Take, dear, the altered vow—I'll love but thee,
I'll love no more!

R. Merlun.

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Photo Browning, Richmond.
Mrs. Elizabeth Evans.

No. XLII.—A SOLDIER'S WIFE IN THE CRIMEA.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF MRS. ELIZABETH EVANS, LATE 4TH (KING'S OWN) REGIMENT OF FOOT.

AS TOLD TO WALTER WOOD.

As a vivid picture of the long and terrible sufferings of our womenfolk during the Crimean War, no story that has been published exceeds in interest this narrative of a gallant lady, who accompanied her husband to the seat of war. Mrs. Elizabeth Evans was married in 1851, and joined her husband's regiment, with which she proceeded to the Crimea. After serving in the Army for twenty-one years he retired, and died just before his golden wedding was to have been celebrated. Mrs. Evans has a small pension, and enjoys the distinction of wearing her husband's medals. She is still in excellent health, and full of that wonderful courage which enabled her to survive the notorious hardships of a woefully mismanaged campaign.

You wish me to tell you something about the days when women went to the wars with their husbands, took part in their sufferings on the march and on the battlefield, and sometimes shared the last resting-place with them. I will do so.

When I take my mind back to those distant years of suffering by young women in the Army, I marvel at the changes which time has wrought. Sometimes I listen to the wails of soldiers and their wives and sweethearts nowadays, and I smile almost pityingly, for, compared with the old order, they are ladies and gentlemen, and do not know what privation and iron discipline are. What would some of your Army women of to-day think of doing a soldier's washing for a halfpenny a day, and sometimes fight to get the work even at that price, because the extra pay meant so many more little luxuries for the soldier and his wife?

When I married, and that was in 1851, I joined the King's Own, which was then at Ashton-under-Lyne, in Lancashire.

My new home was a corner of the barrack-room in which twenty-four men lived and slept. I and my husband ate and drank and slept there, too, our bedroom at night being a corner of the room curtained off. In the daytime the curtain was removed. Such a thing as that privacy which is given nowadays to soldiers' wives was not known then; yet in spite of these crude surroundings, although the men of the Crimean days could not for the most part either read or write, they behaved to me like gentlemen. I want you to remember that, and I wish it to be borne in mind, too, by some of those foolishly talkative people who have said so much against the manners and the morals of the men who, whatever faults they had, were good and faithful friends to me and to the women who shared my sufferings in the Crimea and afterwards in India.

They were stern and bitter days, yet not without plenty of happiness. I had my husband, you see, and we were devoted to each other. That makes a lot of difference in your hard march through life, does it not? He worked for me, and I for him; and so I was glad enough when I could get a big share of the men's washing, at the halfpenny a day each man. We, the women, washed twice a week for them, and at times, when I was lucky, I had nearly a score of soldiers on my books. That meant quite a comfortable addition to the scanty pay they gave the bygone British soldier. He, poor fellow, was

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ill-fed and under fed, and anything he needed or craved for in the way of luxuries he had to buy out of his own pocket. It was wonderful to see how great a value he set on a halfpenny.

Every night, when the orderly officer had been his rounds, the pole was put up and the curtain drawn, and there, in the corner of the big barrack-room, I slept. If ever there was anything which might have been objectionable on the part of any of the men it was soon stopped, I can tell you; but, truth to say, I seldom had any cause to complain.

I often think of the first dinner I saw put on the table in that barrack-room. A large bowl of soup was brought out, and beef in one net and potatoes in another. That was the dinner, but the thing which troubled my mind was the absence of a table-cloth! How speedily was I to learn what a trifle the absence of linen and such-like luxuries was! I was to see the day come when there were as many as four married women in a single barrack-room, living with the men, and sometimes dying amongst them; and, not seldom, giving birth to children. Think of that, you young ladies and gentlemen of the Army nowadays, some of you who expect your husband to have a servant of his own and your own child to have a nurse—and I am not now speaking of the officers, mind you, but the non-commissioned ranks. It may have been selfish of me, but I was happier when I was the only woman in the barrack-room than I was when I had to share it with other members of my sex.

Happy days must have an ending—ah! how swift the finish sometimes comes—and the shadow of the war in the Near East was oppressing England. Troops were being sent away from all our ports, it seemed, bound for that dreadful country which will always be associated with suffering.

My own regiment—you see, I cannot help speaking of the brave old 4th as mine—was under orders, and to the Crimea we sailed, starting from Leith, in a ship they called the *Golden Fleece*.

We got to Malta, and then we went ahead and reached Gallipoli, where so many of the fighting people landed. There were just three women with the regiment when we landed. A few had been left at Malta, and the officers' ladies had gone elsewhere.

The three women made a remarkable mixture, for they represented the United Kingdom. I was English, there was an Irishwoman, and there was a Scotchwoman. We were together at the beginning, and much of suffering and excitement we saw; but the time soon came when we parted, and during the whole of the two years that I spent in the Crimea I never saw another woman. We lost sight of each other; they were taken from me—and, indeed, in that ruthless land it seemed as if everything on which my heart was set was likely to be torn away.

Talk of impressions and memories! The first and clearest of them all are those of locusts and cholera—locusts so dense and innumerable as to look like black clouds. Were they symbolic of the shadow which came across the lives of so many of us? Were they the forerunners of that dreadful visitation which struck strong men down even as they worked and marched, and made their halting-places their graves? Many a fine soldier I saw in health and strength, and a few hours later I marched away with my regiment, leaving him at rest. Terrible, indeed, the sickness was; but it was at least merciful, and most of us who have been through life's great sorrows, and have seen the sufferings of those we love, know that for such brevity of illness we have cause to be thankful evermore.

Many and pitiful were the scenes I witnessed in those early days before the actual fighting began, none more sorrowful than the case of a poor young thing who was a sergeant's wife. She was stricken with the cholera, and the heartbroken husband rigged up a sort of little tent to cover her. They sent for me, and I joined her just as the sun was setting. I wanted a light, as darkness comes so swiftly there, and I told the sergeant to go and fetch a candle. Then I turned to the young wife.

"Look at the beautiful sun, dear," I whispered.

"Ah, me!" she answered. "I shall never watch it rise again. Turn me round, so that I can see it for the last time!"

A drummer-boy was standing near, and, as the sergeant had not come back, I told him to run and fetch a candle. He hurried off, and I tried to turn my poor darling to the golden light, which so wonderfully flooded the skies in the west, towards home and England.

She looked—and she died, and within an hour or so the Engineers had buried her, and everything belonging to her had been burnt. Many such sorry cases there were; but that I remember best of all, because, you see, it was the first, and she was a woman.

Ah! That terrible, pitiless cholera! Worse, surely, than battle itself—for, on the field, you did at any rate get the thrill and excitement

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of action, and knew that you were fighting and suffering for your country; but with disease, it is so different, is it not? You can only watch and wait dumbly, knowing that your enemy is invincible. There was a hospital at Gallipoli, and one of our men and a woman, husband and wife, were sent down there as caretakers. They were both victims, and both died, crying out for each other. Yes, indeed, the cholera seemed to sweep through our ranks as mercilessly as locusts strip the land of its verdure.

I landed in the Crimea in the summer time, and lovely weather it was, too—just as beautiful as the winter was cruel. With balmy air and sunshine you can endure many shortages of food and drink and clothing; but it is different when the icy winds are blowing, when the snow is falling heavily, and when there is nothing at night between your resting-place and the bitter sky.

When the summer was still with us my husband and I made shift to sleep in a sort of dug-out in the ground, with twigs and branches as bedclothes; but when the cold weather came the covering was taken away for firewood. You remember those dark and sorry days, when there were so many clothes and comforts sent from home for the soldiers in the Crimea?—necessities which never reached us, but which remained and rotted on the shores where they had been landed. There were many sad blunderings, and the result was that many soldiers perished, although the means of salvation was so close at hand. I used to see the young recruits, healthy, red-faced, chubby, and cheerful, fresh from home, droop and die of starvation and disease; yet with all the privation and suffering there was such courage and patience shown as almost put into the shade, I think, the valour of the battlefield.

Did I not go into action, you ask? Was I not a witness of some of the desperately contested struggles of the Crimea? Yes, indeed, but I still think that the worst of the war was not the struggle on the battlefield itself, but the long-drawn privations of the trenches, the marches, the pitiless camps, and the dreadful hospitals.

I had marched and suffered with my husband. It was tramp, tramp, tramp, for woman as well as man, and I held up to it with a stout heart. I was young and strong, and I loved my husband. My place was with him, at his side when that was possible, and always with my regiment.

The order came that we were to go to Varna, because the war was getting pretty close to us. It was terrible news, for it meant so much. So far we had been together, I and my husband; now came that most pitiful of all things—a parting which might so easily be for ever.

My officer sent for my husband. "We are going to embark to-morrow morning," he said, "and we are going to meet the Russians. We may get blown off the face of the earth."

That was bad enough, but not so bad as when he turned to the three wives and added: "You women will have to stay behind."

Stay behind, and our husbands marching off to war! It was more than flesh and blood could endure—certainly more than devoted wives could bear. Orders are orders, and discipline is discipline; but women are women, and glory in circumventing orders, especially when love is concerned. A loving woman must have her way, and the three of us came under that heading.

We stole stealthily to the beach to see the men embark; but we were cruelly disappointed. We were forbidden to go near the troops. Think what it meant to us to be so near and yet so far away.

What were we to do? How were we to get on board? I think it was the lively little Irishwoman who solved the problem first. There was the embarkation major flying about, very busy in attending to his hard duties.

The little Irishwoman looked up and attracted his attention. The major saw only three forlorn women, and he had compassion on them. They did not tell him that they had been ordered to remain behind with the sick.

"Be down here early in the morning," he said, "and you shall go on board with the first troops that embark."

How long that night seemed! How little we slept! How fearful we were that in spite of all our plotting and craft we should be discovered and ignominiously defeated! There were some English men-o-war's men on the beach, making facines, and—bless their dear hearts!—they gave us some chocolate and biscuits, and entered into league with us. They tried to make a shelter for us with two or three sacks; and we trembled every moment with the terror of discovery by someone who knew more about us than the major did.

Suddenly, in the night, we became dumb with fear. We heard the voice of our quartermaster, a dear little gentleman, demanding to know who was in the sack

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shelter; but we had described him to the sailors, and they helped us through to the end.

When the morning came the embarkation officer appeared and said: "Oh! you three women, come on!" And joyfully, though tremblingly, we accompanied him. He went to the officer commanding one of the transports and said: "These three women are to go to the front," and you may be sure that we didn't say anything different.

We were on board, but in three different ships as it proved; and then, in spite of all, I was ordered to remain on board, while the troops went to the front!

My husband was almost frantic. But he was not the man to be beaten. The Commander-in-Chief, Lord Raglan, was near, and my husband went straight up to his lordship and said that the other two women had been allowed to land, and begged that I also might go ashore and accompany the troops. "I would rather put a stone round her neck and drown her," he declared, "than leave her here at the mercy of foreigners." And I think it was that which made the Commander-in-Chief have pity; at any rate, he gave orders that I was to go ashore, and ashore I went, and from that time I date my marching in the Crimea. I was to learn what it meant to tramp for a long weary day, without a drop of water to drink, and so utterly exhausted that I could have fallen by the roadside, never to rise again.

The Alma was our destination, and terrible as the march towards the river and the little town was, it was made infinitely worse by the fact that my husband fell sick, and I lost sight of him. But he came up at last, not with my own regiment, but with the Guards. I could not keep up with the column, for my feet were sore and blistered, and my limbs were weary. My husband, bad though he was, would give me a lift.

"Come on, Lil," he would say, "you must keep on marching. If you fall out the Russians will have you, and God knows what will happen then."

The officers and the men, too, would help and cheer me, and the dear colonel himself put heart of grace into me.

"Come," he said cheerily, "keep it up, and if we get back to England I will see that you have some good clothes."

I know that if he had lived, if he had come home, he would have kept his word, but he was killed on the 18th of June, at the unsuccessful storming of the Redan.

The Alma at last! The first real meeting with those Russians of whom we had heard so much and seen so little; the actual battlefield, at the end, almost, of the glorious summer, for it was now towards the close of September.

Here is a little steel engraving of the country where the battle was fought. This is the very spot where I stood, a lonely woman, with the staff, and saw my husband march away with his regiment to storm those dreadful heights which frowned with the Russian guns and bristled with the bayonets.

There were 57,000 English, French, and Turks, against nearly 50,000 Russians, fortified on the heights of Alma, and with 180 field-pieces to protect them. It was terrible to see the position which had to be stormed; and more awful to watch the men of our army advance to the assault.

I had suffered many agonies in the Crimea, but none so poignant as that pain which I endured when I watched my husband march across the far-stretched field which was being ploughed by the merciless cannon-balls and pitted with the rifle bullets.

So many men marched on, with the Colours flying bravely; so few seemed to get towards the heights which were breaking into tongues of fatal fire, and strewing the plains with dead and dying. It seemed as if the battle were some hideous nightmare; yet the dream was so long. Is it not wonderful that we poor human beings can endure so much and still survive?

The fight was finished at last, and we, the allies, were conquerors. My husband, too, was spared, and in the gladness of his salvation I fear that I almost lost sight of the sufferings and sorrows of the rest. The Alma was the first and last battle that I witnessed in the Crimea; but it was more than enough. I do not dwell on its horrors; I try and keep them from my mind, but I do not succeed, and even now, when I am telling you about it, I see, just as clearly as I beheld it then, a brave officer lying where he had fallen, looking with wild eyes towards the heights of Alma. They were big, merry blue eyes, the most beautiful, I think, that I ever saw.

The regimental Colours were badly torn by shot at the Alma, and after the battle I was set to work to repair them, which I did as best I could with my needle. I wonder if there is any other Englishwoman living who can say that she has repaired Colours which she has seen carried into action and waving in the battle smoke? Those tattered folds of silk are now at rest in a peaceful church.

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I got quite used to dodging the shot and shell from the Russian batteries.

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The sufferings of the sick and wounded were terrible. Poor creatures! I cannot say that I nursed them—there were no hospital appliances then, and all I could do was to give them the help of a woman's sympathy. Just a rough covering or tent was put up, when there was material, and beneath it our brave fellows were packed like herrings in barrels, and the three doctors who were with us did all they could. Little enough it was.

The dreadful winter came, and I was perished with cold and hunger. I had nothing except what I stood upright in. We had no blankets, but I had a beautiful great Scotch plaid shawl. This kept me warm to some extent, and often enough I shared my husband's greatcoat, and sometimes had it for myself when he was in the trenches. He would come back from that awful work shivering and almost frozen, and time after time I would remove his boots and rub his feet, which were utterly numb, and likely to come off from frost-bite.

Time after time, when it did not seem humanly possible for him to work in the trenches, I would implore him to go sick, so that he could pull himself together, but he never would. He never shirked his duty—and I am proud of it. I was thankful if I could get him a little drop of warm, weak coffee from the poor old band sergeant. How I suffered physically! But that was nothing to the anguish I endured whenever my husband was away in the trenches, for fear he would be brought back dying, as he helped to bring so many, or never return to me.

Being a woman, I was something of a favourite with all ranks, officers and men alike, and being a wife I wanted to be where my husband was. That happened to be, at one time, on outlying picket, that is to say, as near the Russians as it was possible to get. There was nothing but a little stretch of ground between their nearest sentries and our own, and often in the blackness of the winter night the sentinels would fire upon and kill each other. Outlying picket was no place for a woman, but I was allowed to go because my husband liked to be with me, and I wanted to be with him. Time after time I went, and I got many a terrible scare.

One day we were out and the Russians got a sight of us. "Now, Mrs. Evans," said one of my officers, "you had better make your way back to the camp, because the Russians have got the range of us." So they had, and although I faced it out as well as I could I was thankful to turn and hurry away to a place of safety.

I got quite used to dodging the shot and shell from the Russian batteries. At night we were guided by the trail of the missiles' fire, and in the daytime we were directed by the hiss. Then it was a case of falling to the ground to wait for the crash of the explosion above your head, or the appalling burial of the shot or shell in the earth near you.

We got to take those things very lightly, and the officers would joke and say: "Let us eat and drink what we've got and make the best of it, for to-morrow our heads may be off our shoulders." And often enough they were, too. Very frequently, when we were besieging Sebastopol, I would watch the firing with some of the drummer boys, and it was wonderful to look down into that marvellous fortress and see the big guns bursting into lurid fire and hear their solemn booming in the gloomy hills.

When we were marching to Sebastopol I saw a poor Russian soldier sitting, as it seemed, by the roadside. He was bending down, looking just as if he were taking his boots and stockings off to dress his wounds. I went up, meaning to speak to him, and saw that he had been dreadfully hurt in battle. He did not move, and then I found he had been killed by his own people to prevent him from falling into our hands. You see, they thought we treated their wounded as they treated ours. He wore a leaden charm round his neck, like all Russian soldiers—a simple cross with Christ upon it. It was secured round his neck with a bit of string, and I took it off and kept it as a keepsake. I have the charm still, gilded and fastened to a chain—one of my little mementoes of the war, and here it is for you to see. It is one of the things I could keep—one of the small remembrances that could not be taken from me, because it was of no use to anybody. So much I could not say of a chicken that I got in Alma village—a dear little tame creature which I had for some time, and of which I was very fond. But it disappeared, and I knew afterwards that some of the men of the 44th had turned it into food. I had a kitten, too, a brave little chap that used to stand on my shoulder and watch the screaming shot and shell. He was a dear pet of mine, but I lost him, and had to march away without him.

The fine weather and the bad winter came and went; the months rolled by, every day telling its sorry tale of suffering and death. I lived such a life as few women in existence can speak about—short of food, without a bed,

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I saw some men coming up with three fresh planks . . . and I cried feebly: "Oh, don't bury me yet! I'm not dead!"

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scarcely knowing what decent clothing meant, and witnessing heart-breaking spectacles of suffering in hospital and elsewhere. Miss Nightingale had not in those early days gone out to the Crimea, and I never saw her, for she was at Scutari, and I did not visit that place.

Strong though I was, I fell a victim to fever. I lay on the bare ground, where they had put me, and they simply waited for the end, for it seemed as if nothing could be done for me. There were no nurses, no comforts, and the best they could do in the way of a pillow was a stone which they placed under my head. It is not long since a veteran, who lives not far away, told me how well he remembers putting the pillow for me, but I do not recollect it. I do, however, know that I suddenly seemed to be getting better, and that I saw some men coming up with three fresh planks.

One overwhelming thought oppressed me—due, I know, to those sad things which I had known so well in the Crimea, and I cried feebly: "Oh, don't bury me yet! I'm not dead!" Then they laughed and said: "Never mind that—we've brought a bed for you." And so they had, dear fellows. They lifted me from the ground and put me on the boards. It happened to be lovely weather, and the first time I looked towards the warm and glorious sun I thought that I was in a new and better world indeed.

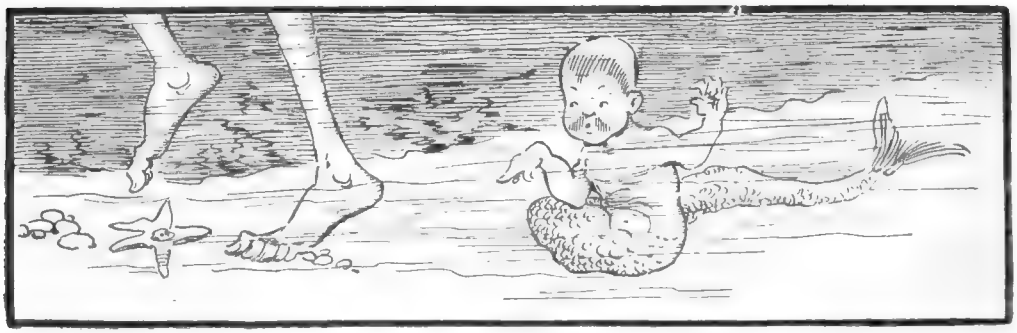
Never can I forget those dreadful partially unconscious hours when the horror of death oppressed me. I used to scream at a shadow when people passed, fearing that they had come to bury me. I had no husband to look after and protect me. He had been sent to Scutari with Russian prisoners, and I had been left behind because I was too ill to move. Can you not imagine what the parting meant for both of us? Until I came back to England I did not know whether he was dead or living.

When I was fit to move I was strapped on to a mule, myself on one side and two men on the other, and in that way I was carried down to the sea and put on board ship, in which I came home to Portsmouth, and there, before we landed, Queen Victoria steamed round and sent on board to inquire about us.

For two years I had not slept in a bed, I had endured privations which I cannot describe, I had witnessed horrors which I dare not speak about, and now I seemed to be in paradise, for on board the ship I had port wine and stout and every good thing that an invalid could need. These comforts were some recompense for the privations we had gone through at the seat of war. But the greatest joy of all was the reunion with my husband.

There was not to be much peace or rest for us. Scarcely had we settled to our home happiness before we were ordered to India, where the right wing of my regiment took part in the Mutiny. But neither my husband nor myself shared in that dreadful work. In India I was separated from him again, and by myself I travelled down the country for several nights to join a missionary's wife, who was coming home, after spending many years in the country, where, till she saw me, she had not set eyes on a white woman for nine years. The terror of the Mutiny had turned her hair quite white.

My Army life was not all sorrow, and it was relieved by plenty of humour. I remember that in India the drum-major of my regiment died, and a smart young man went to get his staff and tunic, having been promoted to the post. He was a young fellow who had often sworn that he would never marry, yet when he got the staff he said: "Well, I may as well take the widow over, too!" And he did. He married her within a few days.



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MARY ANN
OR THE WAIL OF A WAITER

BY A. W. TILLETT

INTRODUCTION.

Lachrymose waiter greeting imaginary regular customer:

"Good morning, sir. Fine day, sir. Well, yes, I am what you might call a bit off. One moment, sir, and I'll tell you my trouble."

(*Shouts down lift:* "Steak and onions one.")

I'm fairly "dished," as you can see from
my pale, pasty looks,
I never thought before that love could
so "cut-up" a man;
My cup is full; I'm "done quite brown,"
in fact I'm "off the hooks,"
And all because there's been a tiff
'twixt me and——

(*Giving order down lift:* "Calves' liver and bacon, sir—yes, sir. Liveranbacon one.")

——'Twixt me and Mary Ann.

You see, she was a cook, sir, just the
very "mash" for me;
'Twas down there in the kitchen that
our "spooning" first began;
For six months we was sweethearts, aye,
as happy as could be,
But now a cove in uniform has poached
my——

("'Ard boiled eggs for two—two 'ard boiled.")

——Has poached my Mary Ann.

I warned her 'gainst all p'licemen, "for,"
says I, quite in a stew,
"You'll fall into the fire if you leave
the frying pan;
This 'eart beneath this dickey gives a
'beat' that's always true"—
My "dripping" tears was useless, for
I've lost my——

("Beefsteak and kidney—yes, sir.")

——I've lost my Mary Ann.

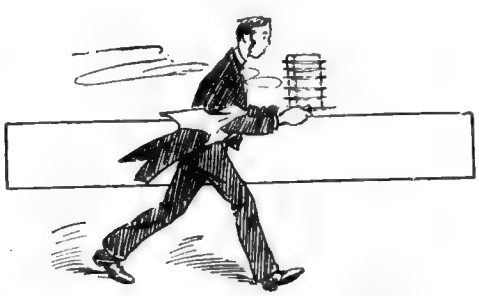
At first I boiled up in a rage, but now I've
simmered down:
"Spilt milk," says I, "was never worth
the saltest tears that ran";
I'll take your tip, sir, that I will, and
banish fretful frown,
For in the sea there's fish as good as
any——

("Gorgonzola cheese G'nzola two.")

——As any Mary Ann.

(*Making out bill.*) "Yes, sir. Steak and onions fifteen, taters seventeen, bread eighteen, pint o' bitter one and ten. Thank ye, sir.

"For a long time he's been hanging round the area, and I felt that the blow was——" (*bell rings*) ——"Coming, sir, coming." (*Exit*).



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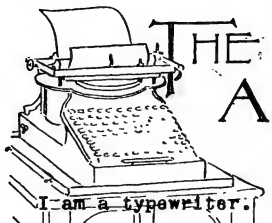

The Romance of a Typewriter

By V.S. Thompson

I am a typewriter. Numbers of people seem to forget that. They call her the typewriter. "Her indeed!" A mere twenty shilling clerk who lives at Crouch End. I wonder how she would like to make all the tiny letters and semicolons that I tap off as easily as the larger L's and capital W's. "Her a typewriter!" Could she spell "necessary" right, twice running? I do, quite often - when she isn't there.

Mine is a wonderful life. Why, only last week I wrote to an Archbishop. But that's nothing. Two years ago - ah! Two - years - ago. It seems like yesterday. He would come in from the outer office - after all the others had gone - take off my cover and - Guess! - write to her. They were the most extraordinary letters. Full of love.

The crosses were the most difficult part - for me. (I suppose you've never tried to make a cross with one tap - so!) At first he used to think capital X's good enough for her. Then he wanted something larger - grander. Then I knew he was in love.

The funny part about it was that he never posted those letters. Never! There were no mistakes in them

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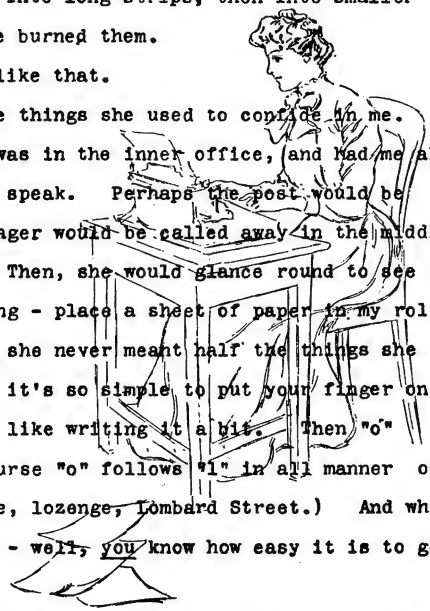
either. No, when he had written one he would sigh, and tear it up, first into long strips, then into smaller squares. Then he burned them.



Some men are like that.

And she. The things she used to confide in me. Reams! For she was in the inner office, and had me all to herself, so to speak. Perhaps the post would be small, or the manager would be called away in the middle of the morning. Then, she would glance round to see if anyone were looking - place a sheet of paper in my roller - and - Of course she never meant half the things she wrote. You see, it's so simple to put your finger on the "l" key - not like writing it a bit. Then "o" follows. (Of course "o" follows "l" in all manner of words - locomotive, lozenge, Lombard Street.) And when you've written lo - well, you know how easy it is to go on.

Sometimes he used to come into the inner office while she was there. But she never showed him what she had typed.

He did not always write letters. One Saturday afternoon he stayed in the office (a bright day, too) and wrote a sonnet. I suppose you've never written a sonnet. First you start off with "O!" - that is, if you're good at them - then you go right on, one line below another, till you reach the bottom of the page. And not one "necessary" from the first word to the last.

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O, that I had voice to sing

The peerless beauty of my lady's - like that, only (if possible) more soul in it. Once he wrote "pearless beauty" by mistake, and tore it up and started all over again. That's love.

Imagine what a relief for my romantic nature to type lines such as these, after Re Bechuanaland Consolidated Deep Levels. Dear Sir, Referring to our last Contango Statement - Ugh! How I hate Contango Statements!

Now we come to the really interesting part of my romance. For months (anyway, it seemed months) I had been writing sonnets for him. For years I had been writing letters - such letters - for her. But she never saw the sonnets, and he never saw the letters. And every day they met and he called her Miss Simpson (not "Dai-er-Miss Simpson", like they do in novels) And they talked of the weather and Re Bechuanaland and quite ordinary things. It was wearing her out. Each morning I thought "To-day, he must say something." Each evening, "Perhaps he will show her his sonnet to-night." Every time the outer door opened I expected to see him rush in and pour forth a passionate tumult (5 or 6 fols) of love. Then she would - But she never did. Neither did he.

No, it happened quite differently. It was a Thursday The manager was out. She had just finished the business letters and - I don't think she quite knew what she was typing. Just her thoughts. "Dear Mr. Wilkin - Dear

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Mr. W - Dear Charles" (I always started them that way) "I have been thinking of what you said the other morn-" (This is only the beginning - You wait) "been thinking of what you asked me when we were down at Richmond on Wednesday afternoon" (That's better. I always like the Richmond letters) "a dozen times I have closed my eyes and the whole scene has come back to me. You were sitting in the bows of our little boat" (Wednesday was Settling Day - poor girl!) "leaning forward a little. You had not spoken for so long and there was the most wonderful light in your eyes. At last your lips moved and you asked me ---- you asked me" - I paused like I always did at "asked me"

Then Charles came in from the outer office. Here, at last, was my opportunity. If only I could keep her mind occupied for two seconds! He walked towards us. His feet made no noise on the thick carpet. He came behind her. He reached forward - Then she saw and tried to snatch at the paper. But he was too quick for her. "May - may I finish it?" he asked. "Yes," she answered - just a whisper.

Then I nerved myself for a big effort.

His fingers crept softly over my keys. Word after word I tapped out his question. (I was glad he had left it to me! I knew her so well) And all the time she was looking how she looked once before when he said he thought it was going to rain.

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At last he had finished and was waiting. She pretended she had not read it through. (They do that) Minute after minute passed, then she turned and gave him - No, - then the manager came in.

I suppose I shall grow old like other typewriters. But even though the worst happens and I am sent to a school to teach, I shall still have had my romance. That makes all the difference. For, each night, when everything is still, and she (my present help) is gone home to Crouch End, I can feel the old spell come over me once more. My cover seems to vanish. A kind of thrill runs down my keys. And there is he - writing sonnets. O, that I had voice to sing The peerless beauty of my lady's - like that. With not one "necessary" **from the first word to the last.**

THE GREAT BOOK.

Two tiny feet that patter;
A head of curls.
Two lips that laugh and chatter,
And teeth like pearls—
Baby is here.

A heart with longing burning:
Two eyes that dream.
A soul with passion yearning,
Some one supreme—
Love has come.

A voice that whispers lowly:
Eyes dimmed with t ars.
Two feet that totter slowly;
The fruit of years!
Life is done.

C. W. Miles.

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The Secret of the Zancigs

How Thought Telegraphy Can be Practised by Everyone.

By

Julius and Agnes Zancig

Illustrated with Photographs by Foulsham & Banfield.

Even in these so-called enlightened days, there exists a pronounced tendency to dismiss anything and everything which cannot be clearly understood without careful thought and study as either "some trick or other," or as merely the result of coincidence, pure and simple. Thus, on countless occasions, when we have stated that we possess "two minds with but a single thought," or, in other words, "that anything Julius Zancig thinks of, his wife, Agnes Zancig, will see," this assertion has been greeted with a sceptical disbelief almost amounting to ridicule. Moreover, even after giving practical demonstrations of the possession of this power, the results have, by a large section of the public, been attributed to codes, signals, wizardry—in fact, to almost every imaginable cause except the true one.

To us, however, it borders on the miraculous that the thinking public has not realised, long since, that it is not the "eighth wonder of the world" that a man and his wife—or any other two people, if you will—should be so much in sympathy that the one can divine the thoughts and wishes of the other. Surely about such a perfect understanding between two human beings there should be nothing so amazingly surprising? And yet because mental telegraphy, which is really nothing more nor less than sympathy and perfect understanding, is, at present, so little understood, it would seem that we are regarded as the sole possessors of a dark, mysterious secret.

But, as a matter of fact, without any doubt at all, everyone in the world, under certain conditions, can impress upon the mind of some other person his or her own mental images. Naturally, this cannot be done in haphazard fashion, for it is essential that the would-be thought transmitter should discover or meet with just the right person to impress—a duplicate, an "affinity," as it were—while the conditions must also be favourable to the development of this strange, subtle, inherent faculty, which is assuredly latent in every normal individual.

For instance, how often does not one meet with people, married couples, great friends, partners in business, and so on and so forth, who continually think of the same thing at the same time; who, in other words, are almost daily, and sometimes hourly, anticipating each other's wishes? Happenings of this sort are, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, attributed to "coincidence," a word which is too often used to account for occurrences which are, at first sight, apparently inexplicable. But, more often than not, this "coincidence" is not coincidence at all, but is the result of a bond of sympathy existing between two minds.

Curiously enough, however, two people may possess the gift of thought transference for a considerable time without actually being aware that such power is theirs. In our case, for instance, it was not until we had been married some little time that several very curious things happened, which proved to us, beyond all manner of doubt, that there existed between us a most powerful affinity.

Thus, on one occasion, when we were living in America, I had to make a journey to New York, and previous to my visit I had thought of purchasing a Gladstone bag which I chanced to see in a shop window. Now, I said nothing to my wife about this, as it was

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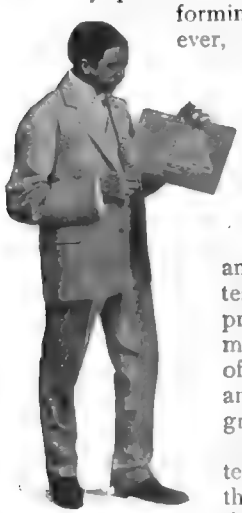
So perfect is the mental sympathy between Mr. Zancig and his wife, that he has only to concentrate his mind on the fact that it is 12.3 p.m.——

merely a passing thought; but when I arrived home that evening, to my profound astonishment I saw the bag on the table. My wife, noting my surprise, quietly explained that she had purchased it because it had occurred to her that I should require a bag on my trip.

Another little case of a similar order arose a few days afterwards over some theatre tickets. I bought two seats for a performance which was to take place three or four days ahead. When I came home, to my great surprise, I found that my wife had been to the box-office shortly before me, and had purchased tickets for the same date and for the identical performance.

Again and again similar occurrences happened; and as purchasing two sets of tickets for one performance is, obviously, a losing game, we finally decided that on no account should one of us purchase tickets, or, indeed, make any purchases without previously informing the other. However, so-called "coincidences" of this kind caused us to ponder seriously over the question as to whether there did not exist between us an affinity of a peculiarly strong order; and after making further tests, both in public and private, we decided to make a regular practice of mental telegraphy, and note carefully our growing powers.



This instance of transferring a thought bears out Mr. Zancig's advice regarding the formation of a mental picture of the idea to be conveyed. He concentrates his thoughts on this geometrical figure——

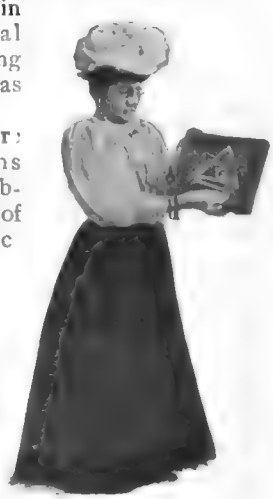
The study proved intensely fascinating, and those who intuitively feel that a bond of sympathy exists between them, and who, in consequence, can train their two minds to think as one, cannot do better than follow the same methods by which we commenced developing what we at first thought was a mysterious faculty, but what we now know exists in everyone in the world if only he or she, as the case may be, will take the trouble to permit that faculty to mature.

——and the idea is at once transferred to Mrs. Zancig by mental telegraphy, enabling her to write the correct time on a slate.

At first, realising the truth of the old proverb, that it is unwise to try to run before one can walk, we commenced by endeavouring to think of like objects simultaneously——that is to say, when we were alone, and, when all was quiet, we would devote a certain fixed time to the experiment. Thus, for a previously arranged period, we would remain absolutely silent, concentrating our minds with full force on something and thinking of that "something" all the time, until, at a given signal, we would disclose to each other what at that particular moment was in our respective minds.

Above all things we would point out that the mind must never be allowed to wander, for perfect concentration is essential to successful telegraphy, and those who cannot keep their mind fixed for any length of time, but who allow extraneous thoughts to obtrude, will never succeed in mastering the real difficulties of training two minds to think as one.

Naturally, there are certain conditions which must be established before work of this kind can be successfully carried out. Thus, absolute passivity is required on the part of both parties. On no account must they be worried, upset, or interrupted by outside matters of any kind, whilst they



——and by so doing enables his wife to reproduce it quite accurately without any other clue.

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Again, wishing to transfer the information that he has a red rose, Mr. Zancig pictures it mentally——

must also endeavour to render themselves unreceptive to all other impressions save the immediate one they wish to receive.

Unfortunately, in our early days of this new "enterprise" we tried to think of anything and everything which happened to cross our brains, with the result that, for some time, our percentage of accurate work was very low. In consequence, we found that we were not making as much rapid progress as we should have liked; and, therefore, in order to make our mental messages more perfect, we agreed to limit our field of experiment. In other words, instead of choosing all sorts and conditions of subjects, we resolved to try, on one occasion, nothing but colours; on another, nothing but flowers; on another, nothing but animals; and so on and so forth.

Moreover, by working on these lines we found that results daily became more and more accurate, while the greater the limits the more successful was our thought transference. For instance, instead of trying to think of all animals as a whole, we limited a number of experiments to thinking of only four-footed domestic animals, such as cats and dogs and horses; and, by eliminating from our reckoning certain kinds of objects, we naturally arrived at some accuracy with reference to those we agreed to test.

The hardest test of all—mental arithmetic of an extraordinary type.

On the face of it, it is plain that this should be so, for a person trying to think of animals, if he or she confines his field to four-footed animals, is certainly more prone to divine what kind of an animal is in the other person's mind than if all animals were included in the mental survey.

Again, when we thought of other objects we at first invariably limited our "guess work" (for such we thought it was for quite a long time) to well-defined limitations — when thinking of flowers, for example, we arranged to include only white, blue, or red flowers at the time, so as not to try the brain too severely. This plan developed exceedingly well, and from innumerable tests which we have made since those early days, we have proved clearly that if any two people, between whom there exists a certain amount of natural affinity, will commence operations in the manner herein explained, they will, in a very short time, achieve astonishing results.

——with the result that Mrs. Zancig triumphantly puts his thought into words.

Let it be understood, once and for all, that in the art of training two minds to think as one, no occult powers are necessary. The sole reason why people are sceptical on such matters is that, in these days, we have noticed there is a too pronounced tendency to dismiss everything which cannot be at once understood without careful study as either "fake" or "trickery."

There is one point above all others which we would impress upon those who decide to take up intelligently a study of "mental telegraphy," and that is the question of practice. It is a great mistake, when testing initial experiments, to devote more than ten or twelve minutes at a time to the work. Still, if a fair percentage of correct transferences are obtained between two given people, it may be accepted beyond doubt that the affinity exists, in which case the length of each lesson may be

Mrs. Zancig, however, is equal to the occasion, and provides the correct answer.

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increased, though, except in cases of the strongest affinity, a quarter of an hour's steady application will probably prove as much as the mentality of the experimenters can stand.

As regards the best tests with which to commence operations, we consider that colours have no equal. Thus, suppose two people try to transfer an impression of, say, blue. One will think intently of a blue sky, and, strange though it may seem to the uninitiated, it is none the less a fact that in the other person's mind there will arise an impression of some great blue object. With other colours it is the same, and after a time it will be found that minute shades of colours can be transmitted; while, once having successfully accomplished colour transference, it is an easy matter to pass on to other classes of transmission.

Still another point beginners would do well to observe. Long practice has proved to us that if a person selects some particular time and gives up that time to this work the results are almost invariably more successful than at any other period. For example, the would-be thought transferers should decide on a certain hour—say, eleven in the morning—for practice, and to this time they should adhere rigidly. Moreover, if the hour is accidentally passed and it is eleven-thirty or twelve, it is wiser to let the experiment pass for that particular morning than not to keep to the original eleven o'clock arrangement.

After a month or so of practice in sending descriptions of ordinary objects, work should then be commenced in transmitting names of persons, countries, etc. In sending a name there are, we would point out, certain "tips" which will be found of the greatest assistance. Thus, every name, wherever possible, should be made into a sort of picture. Suppose, for example, a woman's name is Lily. We do not try to transmit the word "Lily" as a word, but to send an impression of the flower lily—in other words, the sender should form in his mind as complete an image as possible of the flower, or any object which can be "pictured" in this manner, and transmit that.

The best way to work in mastering the sending of names which cannot be transmitted by picture and which, therefore, must be sent letter by letter, is to begin with the Roman letters, especially those which resemble printing. But experience has taught us that of all the schemes for learning these letters, by far the most valuable is to try and make a picture of each letter; thus, to cite a simple example, if you take the letter "I" try to convey a picture of a human eye. If you have the letter "B" try to convey a picture of a bee, the insect, and so on and so forth. These hints are especially worth bearing in mind, and, as mental telegraphy is merely a question of practice, those who begin by sending simple messages to each other will soon find their powers developing to an extraordinary extent.

During the course of our long and varied travels, one thing in particular has struck us, and that is the prevalent belief almost all the world over that thought transference is a positively uncanny power. In Ireland, indeed, during our recent visit we found that the general idea on this subject was primitive in the extreme, and several times priests and ladies who were present at our performances left their seats muttering audibly: "This is not human work—it is too ghostly and uncanny." And, seemingly, many well-read, educated people to-day would appear to hold an almost similar belief. Therefore we would add emphatically once again that about mental telegraphy there is nothing occult at all.

To-day, however, it is too little understood, but those readers who will carefully study the few hints laid down in this article will find that they are anticipating a pastime which, in the future—and the near future, too—will become widely and generally popular.

TOO GRAMMATICAL.

They wandered down a shady lane,
A maiden and her youthful swain;
When hearts are young, then love's the main
In precincts town or rural.
"I long to kiss you once," he sighed;
"How singular!" the maid replied.
But when he'd kissed her, then she cried:
"I mean, how plural!"

S. M.

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CAP & BELLS

THE REST AS SAMPLE.

MRS. MULVANEY (the laundress): "Indade, ma'am, an' it's miserable, I am. I'm but just on me feet wid the pain in me back, and Jimmy he's as bad off; he has a cough on him that sounds like an empty bar'l. Cough for the lady, Jimmy."

* * * * * *

A WORD IN SEASON.

Occasionally you see young men in the street who are very elegant of attire and who wear white spats over their ankles. One of these youths was standing in Fleet Street the other day, with his spats looking like a pair of cuffs at the ground end of his trousers, when a rather countrified young man, evidently a farmer, stepped up to him and said:

"Young man, it's none of my business; but perhaps you would like to know that them 'ere white stockings of yourn have dropped down over your shoes."

* * * *

PARTLY.

"Do you believe in church lotteries?" she asked.

"Some kinds," he replied doubtfully.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"Well," he answered, "I believe in church weddings."

* * * * *

TO "HER."

I wish I were your bootlace!
It's odd, perhaps, but true.
The reason? Why, for then should I
Be pulled through life by you.

I wish I were your waistbelt!
Pray don't think it bad taste—
But oh! to feel you clasping me
Around your slender waist!

I wish I were—oh! anything
Except your own sweet self!
To have to read such silly rot
From idiots like
Myself.

* * * * *

A SEQUENCE OF IDEAS.

TOMMY: "Pa, the teacher says that if a man gets dyspepsia it may make him bald-headed. Is that so?"

MR. FIGG: "It is."

TOMMY: "Then if a man eats too much pie would he be pie-bald?"

BOTH OF THEM THERE.

Readings were got up for a charitable cause by the well-meaning curate, who opened the proceedings himself with a prose piece of a moral and didactic nature. To nervousness and a fatal habit of misplacing initial letters must, no doubt, be attributed his mishaps, the worst of which was when, with levelled forefinger and desperate earnestness, he shouted:

"See yon man upon the bizzy drink."

At this climax the unrestrained audience overwhelmed the reader.

* *

"When I took you into partnership," said the indignant father, "I expected you to be untiring in your devotion to the interests of the business."

The son wriggled into a more comfortable position and drew at his cigar.

"I think I have been," said he. "You never have noticed me tire myself yet, have you pa?"

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TOUJOURS LA POLITESSE!

Chivalrous Squirrel: "Will you share my umbrella, madam?"

DISILLUSION.

The letter she had just opened began: "There are four millions of people in London, but the absence of one little woman, even if she be but a few miles away, has rendered it for me a lonely waste, an abomination of dreariness."

And then it came to the bottom of the page, and she solemnly wiped a tear from the corner of her eyes and smiled, and murmuring: "He is going to write me a nice letter this time," turned over and continued: "The cook in this house, who was the only woman who could grill a sole properly, has gone for her holidays, and ——"

That letter was at once torn into a thousand pieces, and he would have shared the same fate if he had been there present.

* * * * *

INCURABLE.

"What a talkative woman Mrs. Vatageur is."

"Yes; why, not long ago we were out driving on a cold day, and even her teeth chattered."

* * * * *

A MODERN WOOING.

EDWIN (amateur photographer): "That's it. Another plate spoilt."

ANGELINA: "What spoilt it?"

EDWIN: "The light of your eyes."

P.S.—Engaged.

Tommy (to his sister): "Emma, if you give me a bit of your cake, I'll spoil the piano so that you won't be able to take a lesson for a fortnight!"

HOW FUNNY!

"Oh, Mr. Hunker," exclaimed Miss Dorothy, who is an enthusiastic ornithologist, "which of the song birds are you fondest of?"

"I prefer the hen, Miss Dorothy."

"But the hen isn't a song bird."

"Well, it is the only bird whose lay I care for."

* * * * *

AN IMPORTANT *RÔLE*.

"To-morrow our dramatic club,"
Quoth Smith—a big, bucolic fool
Who lives at Slushington-cum-Mire—
"Plays Hamlet at the village school.

"You all must come and see the show;
'Twill do you good, the six-mile walk.
I shall be there—in fact, I am
Impersonating Marshal Stalk."

"Hamlet and Marshal Stalk!" I gasped,
"Excuse me, but I think you're wrong.
I know my Hamlet fairly well,
But Marshal Stalk—oh, go along!"

"There's no mistake," he snapped, and fetched
A Shakespeare to refute my talk;
Then read with ringing scorn these words:
"Enter the ghost *with martial stalk*."

Charles Vivian.

* * * * *

QUICK WORK.

MUGGINS: "Busby is a remarkably easy man to get acquainted with, don't you think?"

JONES: "I never noticed it."

MUGGINS: "He is, though. I hadn't known him for over an hour before I borrowed a shilling of him, and inside of the next hour we got so well acquainted that he refused to lend me another one."

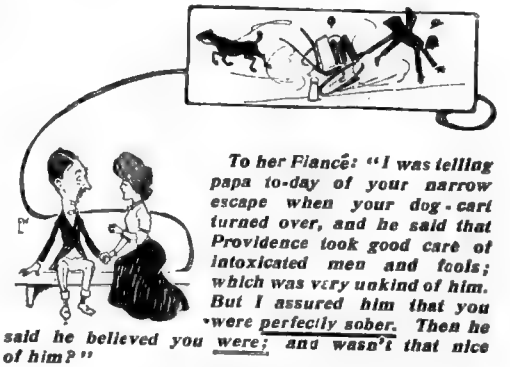
* * *

TRUE.

FIRST LAZY MAN: "After all, a clay pipe has an advantage over all others."

SECOND DITTO: "Why?"

FIRST LAZY MAN: "Well, if you let it fall on the pavement you needn't trouble about picking it up."



To her Fiancé: "I was telling papa to-day of your narrow escape when your dog-cart turned over, and he said that Providence took good care of intoxicated men and fools; which was very unkind of him. But I assured him that you were perfectly sober. Then he said he believed you were; and wasn't that nice of him?"

[CAP AND BELLS continued overleaf.]

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He: "Of course, ladies are much more handsome than men."
She: "Naturally."
He: "No, artificially."

A HOMELY REQUEST.

Men of influence must often be amused at the odd requests made to them by persons ignorant of the limitations of human power.

While a well-known R.A. was at Balmoral painting a picture for the late Queen, one of his models was a great, brawny fellow who had wandered into the Highlands from London, where he had been a costermonger. One day when the R.A. was painting, the man said:

"You be often along o' the Queen; I wish you'd ask a favour of her for me."

"What is it?" asked the R.A., "perhaps she might grant it."

"Well, sir, you see, I keeps a pig, and I should be very much obliged to her if she would let me have her swill."

* * * * *

A MASCULINE PLEA.

"A woman suffers in silence;
Man's grumblings never cease;"
And though we doubt the assertion,
We wisely hold our peace!

But if these suffering victims
Of vile man's tyranny
Would let us poor men do likewise,
How happy we should be!

Charles Vivian.

* * * * *

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE.

"And am I the first girl you ever made love to?" asked the lady's maid of her valet lover.

"Well," was the reply, "I've pressed suits before, you know."

* * *

"What is the meaning of that red line above the fourth storey of your house?" asked a stranger of a farmer in Holland.

"That is a watermark. That mark shows how high the water was during the great overflow about a year ago."

"Impossible. If the water had been that high the whole town would have been swept away."

"The water was never that high. It only came up to the first storey window, but the boys rubbed the mark out three or four times, so I put it up there where they can't get at it. It takes a smart man to circumvent those boys."

A REASON FOR NOT MARRYING.

PRETTY TEACHER (severely): "Did your mother write this excuse?"

BAD BOY: "Yes'm."

PRETTY TEACHER: "Humph. It looks very much like one of your scrawls."

BAD BOY: "Mamma wrote it, but, please m'm, she had sister Jennie in one arm crying with a bumped head, and brother Willie in the other with a cut finger, and a lot of sewing on her lap, and she was rocking the cradle with her knees, and she had to write with her toes."

PRETTY TEACHER (in the evening): "I am very sorry, Mr. Poorchap, but I have changed my mind; I shall never marry."

* * * *

THE BETTER PART.

"I caught sight of a burglar under my bed in the hotel the other night."

"Dear me. What did you do? Pull him out?"

"No, I sent for the chambermaid, and made her sweep the room. The poor fellow died of suffocation."

* * * *

PROBABLY.

MRS. CRIMSONBEAK: "I see by the paper that women clean the streets of Cannes."

MR. CRIMSONBEAK: "Wear long trains out there, too, do they?"

* * * *

THE "HOUSE BEAUTIFUL."

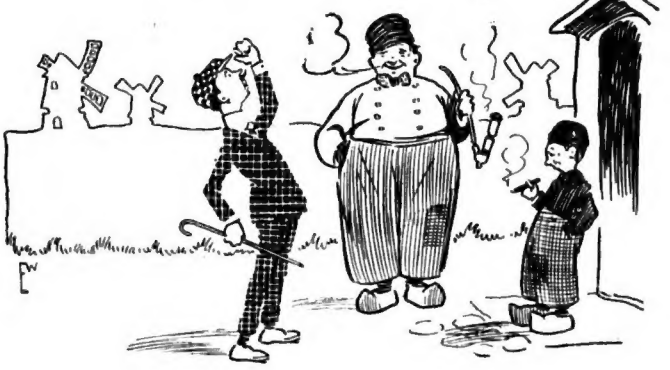
FAIR COUNTESS: "I wish to get some rugs—something artistic and æsthetic, you know; but I can't afford to pay a very high price."

HONEST DEALER: "Come this way. Here, madam, are some antique Turkish rugs just in from the factory. Take them home, smear 'em with grease and tobacco juice, then wash them a little, dry them in an oven, lay them for three days in the sun, and they'll look as faded and antique as the genuine imported article costing ten times as much."

* * * *

AN OBJECT OF ENVY.

Happy is the bald-headed man. He never wants his hair cut when the barber's shop is crowded.



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ORDERS AND ORDERS.

A gentleman was looking at a suite of rooms. He found them quite satisfactory, and said to the man in charge:

"I will take them."

"Have you any children, sir?"

"Yes, two."

"Then I cannot let you have the rooms."

"Why, my children are both married, and live two hundred miles away."

"That makes no difference. My orders are not to take in any tenant who has children."

* * * * *

CANNED MYSTERY.

MR. YOUNGWIFE: "Really, my dear, this tastes very good. What is it?"

MRS. YOUNGWIFE: "I don't know. It came in a tin, and the label boiled off in the hot water before I noticed it."

A YOUNG FINANCIER.

A certain City man, in order to impress business methods on his son early in life, told the youngster that if he would see that the gas bill was paid before a certain day each quarter he could have the discount for himself.

The boy took very kindly to the idea, and captured the discount every time the bill came in. To his father's surprise, however, the gas bill began to increase in a remarkable manner. He found one night that his son was burning gas all over the top of the house from ten o'clock until six o'clock the next morning. The youngster had become a Napoleon of finance, and had discovered the fact that the bigger the bill the bigger the discount.

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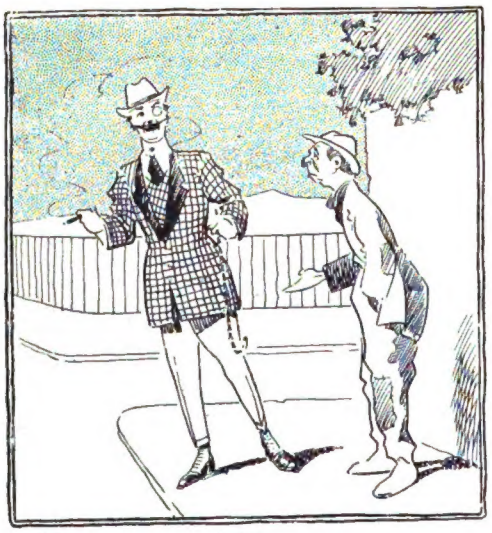
TOO BAD.

POET: "Whatever does this mean? My publisher sends me a bill for a new waste-paper basket!"



"Spare a copper, sir?"
"Can't, but there's a gentleman coming round the corner who can."

The gentleman round the corner!

WOULD COME HOME AGAIN.

At Monte Carlo a gambler had won the maximum at "Rouge et Noir" three times in succession.

"There is a fellow running off with a splendid haul of bank-notes," said a spectator.

"Oh," carelessly interjected the croupier, "that makes no difference to the bank. It is merely a bit of money sleeping out for the night."

* * * * *

A WRINKLE.

If you want to make sure your advice will be taken, have it engraved on your umbrella handle.

* * * * *

ILL-DIRECTED ENERGY.

"You say that you were discharged from your former place for being too industrious?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"That's very strange. What did you do?"

"I went down in the cellar one day and dusted the old wine bottles."

MADE H'AMENDS.

"'Olloway Road—all the way for tuppence," bawled an energetic 'bus conductor.

"You have dropped something," said a humorous passenger, with a smile which revealed his meaning.

"Never mind," was the answer, "we shall pick it up at the Hangel."

* * * * *

QUITE FAST.

"You have been losing flesh lately, haven't you?"

"Yes, I've been shaving myself."

* * * * *

AN ALL-ROUND BED.

COUNTRYMAN (to furniture dealer): "I want to git a bed and a mattress."

DEALER: "Yes, sir; spring bed and spring mattress, sir?"

COUNTRYMAN: "No; I want the kind that kin be used all the year round."

[*CAP AND BELLS continued overleaf.*]

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A DAY OF DAYS.

HUNGRY TRAVELLER: "Have you got a nice plum cake for a poor man that hasn't had a bite to eat in three days?"

MRS. JONES: "Cake? Why, isn't bread good enough for you?"

TRAVELLER: "Not to-day This is my birthday, mum!"

* * * *

NOT *HIS* YOUTH.

VISITOR (to man in cell): "What brought you here, sir?"

PRISONER: "Youth, sir."

VISITOR: "Youth! Why, you look to be fifty if a day!"

PRISONER: "I'm past that. It was the youth of my lawyer that did it."

* * * * *

A FRIEND INDEED.

An ostentatious member of a certain County Council, whose father is well known as a retired omnibus-driver, was one day displaying a large seal he usually wears, representing St. George and the Dragon, and while several bystanders were expressing their admiration of it, its owner remarked, in solemn tones:

"Aw, one of my ancestors is—aw—supposed to have killed the dragon—aw—don't you know?"

"Dear me," inquired one of his hearers, who knew something about him, "did he run over it?"

* * * * *

NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

"Weel, John, how are you the day?" said a minister to one of his parishioners on meeting him on the road.

"Gey weel, sir; gey weel," replied John cautiously, "gin it wisna for the rheumatism in my richt leg."

"Ah, well, John, be thankful, for there is no mistake you are getting old like the rest of us, and old age, you know, doesn't come alone."

"Auld age, sir," returned John. "I won'er to hear ye. Auld age has naething to do wi't. Here's my ither leg, just as auld, an' it's quite sound an' soople yet."

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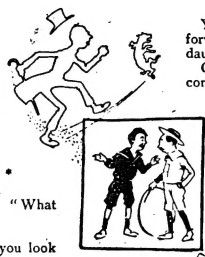

NO ILLUSIONS.

YOUNG MAN: "I assure you, sir, I look forward longingly to the union with your daughter."

GIRL'S FATHER: "Ah, well, that's a candid confession, anyhow. She'll certainly bring you there if she's half as extravagant as I've allowed her to be."

* * * *

STILL HANDICAPPED.

JOHNNIE (visiting): "Can I have another biscuit?"

JOHNNIE'S MA: "Why, Johnnie, what an appetite you have."

JOHNNIE: "H'm. You're two ahead of me, ma."

* * *

A MODEL MAN.

SYMPATHETIC PLAIN FRIEND (to inconsolable young widow): "The last time I met your dear husband he stopped and spoke to me with such a funny greeting that I was the happier for it all day long."

YOUNG WIDOW (still oblivious to everything except her loss) "Yes, that was just like dear David. There was no woman so humble, or homely, or unattractive, or dull but that he could find something pleasant to say to her, and would take pains to say it."

* * * * *

***Tommy Giggs:* "My sister's sweetheart kicked my dog yesterday, but I got even with him, you bet."**

***Johnny Briggs:* "How?"**

***Tommy Giggs:* "I mixed quinine with her face powder. Won't she taste bitter!"**

SOME ORIGINALITY ANYHOW.

A gentleman had a decidedly original little daughter. One day the governess discovered her in a hand-to-hand combat with a child of her own age.

"Don't you know you are doing very wrong?" said the teacher rebukingly, "and that such evil actions are caused by the promptings of the devil?"

"Well," was her answer, "maybe the devil did te'l me to pull her hair, but I thought of scratching her face all myself."

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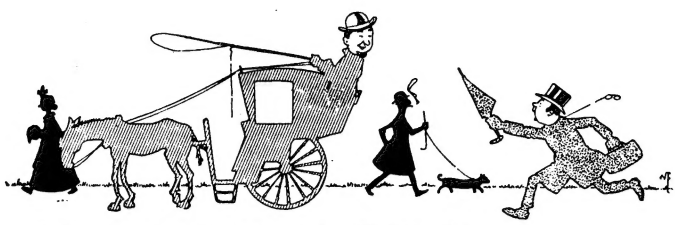

***Gentleman:* "Cabby, a sovereign if you catch the four-thirty train."**

***Cabby (addressing his emaciated steed):* "Now, then, ole bag-o'-bones, just fancy the cats are arter yer, an' show us wot yer kin do."**

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

A PERSONAL WORD FOR "ROYAL" READERS.

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION.

Let me remind my readers of the third photographic competition, a full announcement of which I made in my last issue. The two subjects given are:—(1) "My Sunday Best"; (2) "A Morning Dip." The first is to be a photograph of a child (or children) dressed in its best clothes, and the scene may be indoors or out of doors. The second should represent a child (or children) bathing in the sea or some inland water, or undergoing the ordeal of a morning tub indoors.

The prize-winner in each subject will receive three guineas for the copyright of his or her photograph, which may be reproduced in THE ROYAL, together with a selection of the best efforts of other competitors. Each competitor whose work we reproduce, with the exception of the winner, will receive half-a-guinea consolation prize. Competitors may go in for both subjects if they wish to.

All competitors must send in their efforts not later than Saturday, August 15th.

HAVE I DESERVED IT?

MR. HERBERT J. BRANDON sends me the following lamentation:

EDITORIAL WAYS.

I find all editorial ways
Quite undeserving of my praise.

For contributions he will ask:
To fill his need I make my task.

So very inconsistent he—
My efforts all come back to me.

If for my works he has no need,
Then why for contributions plead?

He sends his compliments, indeed;
Can these supply my every need?

When my landlady wants a cheque,
Of compliments what does she reck?

No, no; my pen can yield no praise
To crooked editorial ways.

Now, I notice he doesn't mention THE ROYAL and its Editor. But why send the verses to me if I am not the gentleman he is talking—at? I ask him: Do I deserve his diatribe?

A GOOD START IS HALF THE BATTLE.

"What I find more difficult than anything else," writes a correspondent, "is to begin a story. Once I get over the first few paragraphs, all's plain sailing."

Quite so. And you, my dear correspondent with literary ambitions, are by no means the only one who raises a similar lamentation! The beginning of a story, though not so important as the middle or the end, is much the hardest to write. In the middle and the end you have action and the story to help you along. The beginning is generally taken up with explanation. And the problem is, how to make that explanation interesting. That's where the art of a writer comes in. It's not so much what you write as how you write that makes the beginning of a story a success or a failure.

It is possible to make explanations and even descriptions interesting to the general reader.

UNHAPPY ENDINGS.

You may take this as a golden rule: End your stories happily. People read for their pleasure, not for their instruction, and it's no pleasure to have one's feelings harrowed. But there are exceptions even to golden rules. A tragic ending can be used only at the tail of an intensely dramatic story, and the ending itself must be intensely dramatic as well. A vague, mournful story leading up to an equally vague and mournful finish is a drug on the market. A saleable tragic story must be like a roll of thunder ending in a flash of lightning—something that leaves the reader not depressed or with a lump in his throat, but with tingling pulses and beating heart. Stories of this kind are the rarest, not because few people attempt them, but because there are few, very few, people who have sufficient imagination, force, and literary skill to write them.

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